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PEEL WEEKLY NEWS

MISSISSAUGA | BRAMPTON | CALEDON

Apr. 8, 2021

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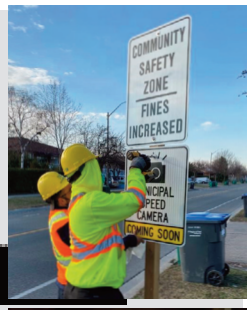
Automated speed cameras arriving in Mississauga



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No wrongdoing in fatal police incidents: SIU

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PAMA encourages residents to Stay Positive and Celebrate!

LIFESTYLE Pg 30

Peel sent back into lockdown as COVID cases rage

by Catherine Soplet and Alex Gregory

A Peel resident gets vaccinated at a clinic within the region earlier this year.. The province reported a new high of more than 104,000 vaccinations administered on Apr. 6, but a further stay-at-home order, issued Wednesday, will be the only way to ensure that hospitals aren't overrun by new COVID-19 cases. (Region of Peel)

Residents hoping for a lively spring will have to wait just a little longer, as Peel and the rest of the province heads into a third extended lockdown this morning.

After rumblings by provincial sources indicating a stay-at-home order was imminent, Premier Doug Ford and Health Minister Christine Elliott confirmed the news Wednesday afternoon.

"The next four weeks are critical," said Ford, pointing to spiking COVID-19 case counts and positivity rates in Peel, Toronto and other regions for the order. "Hope (is) on the horizon."

Under the new stay-at-home order, non-essential businesses will remain limited to curbside pickup and pickup and delivery through early May, with restricted hours for pickup and delivery. Like the previous lockdown, essential businesses will remain open -- this time, with new restrictions, as the province seeks to limit big-box retail stores to selling essential items only.

While citing vaccinations as the "best hope to beat this virus," Ford also pointed to several trends that forced the province to act, including an increasing caseload in hospitals and ICUs, outbreaks in GTA-area schools and non-compliance from residents looking to shop as reasons for the order. The province reported a further 3,215 active cases and 17 deaths on Wednesday, with a positivity rate of 6.7 per cent.

"Stay at home. We did it before and it worked," said Ford, who admitted that certain policies, such as trying to stop residents from moving region-to-region, can't be enforced. "We don't have police officers to chase people down – we ask for cooperation."

People have been complying, but a large part have not been, "or we wouldn't be in this plight," said Elliott. "(The) back-and-forth prolongs the brunt of the effort borne by businesses."

Continued Pg 6

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Peel schools close for two weeks amid COVID outbreaks

by **Surjit Singh Flora and Alex Gregory**

April Break just got a lot longer.

The Region of Peel issued an order this week to close all schools in the region for two weeks, ahead of a confirmed plan by the province to issue a four-week stay-at-home order within the province.

The region said Monday that the order would run through at least Apr. 18, and that further extensions to the order "will be made, as required," according to representatives from the region.

The move was motivated by a number of outbreaks at schools within Caledon, Brampton and Mississauga, including the closure of more than 17 schools within the region and outbreaks within elementary and secondary schools. Under the order, schools were ordered to switch to remote-only instruction, with the second week reserved for the delayed "April Break" vacation.

Public health officials in Peel said the move was a "necessary step to protect staff and students" in the region.

"With increasing case counts and the presence of variants of concern, we need to break chains of transmission and keep our schools safe," said Peel's medical officer of health, Dr. Lawrence Loh. "I know this will be challenging for parents to navigate and we appreciate all the sacrifices parents continue to make as we continue to fight COVID-19 in our community."

The decision to close schools and move learning online were seemingly left to the discretion of public health units, with neighbouring regions, including Wellington-Dufferin-Guelph, Thunder Bay, Sudbury and Toronto — the latter of which made the jump Wednesday after several schools indicated they would voluntarily move to the virtual format.

Sources over the past several months have pointed to several factors, including apathy over current provincial restrictions, poor ventilation and inconsistent guidelines as driving factors for outbreaks at multiple schools.

Despite that, however, education minister Stephen Lecce appeared on television as recently as Apr. 1 to ensure residents in the province that schools would remain open.

"Students deserve to be in class," Lecce said in a public statement.

However, public pressure and a new poll showing that the public popularity of Premier Doug Ford has declined in the past three months, which a market research company attributed to the province's handling of the COVID-19 pandemic and the vaccine, may have prompted immediate action to address the issue.

No timeline has been given for when schools could reopen, but with the current stay-at-home order in place, it is expected that school closures will also be affected.

"The health and safety of students and staff in schools, along with a strong commitment to student learning, continue to be our main focus," said Peel District School Board's director of education, Colleen Russell-Rawlins.

Automated speed cameras arrive in Mississauga

by **Alex Gregory**

The long-awaited push to curb speeding motorists in Mississauga finally reached a milestone Monday, as the city announced plans to install its first two Automated Speed Enforcement (ASE) cameras.

Signs were placed earlier this week letting residents know about the two new camera sites, which will be installed at Morning Star Drive (between Lancaster Avenue/Netherwood Road) in Ward 5, and Sawmill Valley Drive (between Folkway Drive and Grosvenor Place) in Ward 8, which will be installed in the near future.

The automated cameras, which have been installed at several sites in Brampton and Caledon, enforce speed limits in pedestrian and school zones which have experienced a high frequency of speeding motorists.

The cameras take a photograph of the speeding vehicle's licence plate and mail a ticket to the associated address.

The city continues to experience dangerous instances of speeding in multiple neighbourhoods, which motivated the decision to install the cameras, said Ward 9 councillor Pat Saito, who chairs the city's Road Safety Committee.

"We know that speeding is a serious problem on our roads and that we need to take action to get people to slow down," said Saito. "Our residents deserve safer streets and ASE is one of the tools we can use to help move the needle in the right direction so that we're not just issuing tickets – we're helping to change behaviour."

Additional locations planned for camera installation include Cedar Creek Drive (between Runningbrook and Lexicon Drive) in Ward 3, Mississauga Valley Boulevard (between Voltarie Crescent and Silver Creek Boulevard) in Ward 4, Whitehorn Avenue (between Weir Chase and Pickwick Drive)in Ward 6 and Old Derry Road (between Second Line West and Gooderham Estate Boulevard) in Ward 11.

In a statement, the city said staff will assess the feasibility of increasing the number of cameras and the possibility of implementing cameras on different types of roadways that are designated community safety zones.

"We are serious about getting drivers to slow down and are taking concrete action to make our roads safer for everyone," said Mayor Bonnie Crombie.

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PEEL
WEEKLY
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Digital Newspaper

EXTRA! EXTRA!! COVID-19 Lockdown!

Peter Whitaker
Publisher

If you're like me, your head is spinning.

On Tuesday, they closed the schools for two weeks, and now we are under a 28 day "break"... give me one!

As we go through all these hoops, you have to just think to what Doug Ford says last week. "If we don't have our health, we won't have an economy"

My question is — who's minding the chicken coop?

We have all the numbers saying the virus is up and those numbers are rising by the day and the government has to get it under control before we can open back up, but this is sounding like a broken record.

Why can't we find the areas that are giving us the problem and lock them down?

It would appear that factories and processing plants that are the biggest culprits, not retailers and outside patios. I have a suggestion — why are we not testing and vaccinating these places now? We have to vaccinate all the population anyway.

Why not make these factories a priority?

The definition of insanity is doing the same thing over and over again, and expecting a different result.

We keep having the same results, so let's fix it!

The logic is flawed, in the way we have dealt with this virus compared to some other countries.

While we would have all screamed blue murder if we had been looked down when this virus first came to life, we now look at the countries that did do that and now they are almost back to normal.

Oh, and those governments are sure to get re-elected. Here we are, not so sure we will be trusting the same people again.

My ranting is going to get you and me nowhere, though. We are in a situation that does have an endgame and we just need to finish the path laid out for us.

Reopen at the end of April and have schools back in two weeks, but you know what... it is all up to us.

Wear the masks, keep your distance and don't gather in a group.

The question is — do you think we're going to finally get it right?

Spring season clipped as province issues stay-at-home order

Continued from Pg 1

Several sectors will also have limited in-person capacity at their businesses, with garden centres, indoor greenhouses, safety supply stores and others to utilize a 25 per cent capacity restriction.

While decision to move into a stay-at-home model was difficult, local leaders were supportive of the province's decision.

"I firmly believe this is the right course of action at this critical moment to reduce the spread of variant cases and COVID-19 hospitalizations," Mayor Bonnie Crombie said Wednesday afternoon. "We are now more than a year into this pandemic... new variants are far more dangerous, spread faster and do more harm than the virus we were fighting last year. We are now in a race between stopping the spread of the variants and getting vaccines into arms."

The province also announced Wednesday that it had surpassed 104,000 vaccinations on Apr. 5, while local councillors have supported plans to boost mobile "vaccination units," which would target high-risk areas and open up vaccinations to residents 18 and older.

The need to protect frontline staff and workers in manufacturing sectors, particularly with paid sick leave, continues to be a key necessity, said Brampton Mayor Patrick Brown.

"Dr. (Lawrence) Loh and myself have been outspoken about the need for paid sick days," said Brown. "I find it infuriating that here we are so far into the pandemic and we still have workers going to work with symptoms because they can't afford to miss a pay check because they have to put food on the table or pay rent. Paid sick days are a critical tool we need for our vulnerable essential workers."

Others, including opposition parties, say more should have been done to protect workers in frontline sectors and not reduced provincial orders too early.

"This is a devastating day for people, families, and local businesses," said provincial NDP leader Andrea Horwath Wednesday afternoon after the announcement.

Health Minister Christine Elliott speaks during a press conference announcing a provincial stay-at-home order on Apr. 7, 2021. (PWN Staff)

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Opinion

Another nail in the coffin of leadership as stay-at-home order begins

Alex Gregory

Ford fiddled while Peel and other regions burned.

In the process of writing this, I was tempted to post the words I wrote for a previous column, written at the onset of the previous provincial lockdown three months ago, with the accompanying statement, "The definition of insanity is doing the same thing over and over again and expecting different results."

How else would you describe the response from our provincial leaders over the past few weeks?

Having the education minister proudly proclaim that schools will stay open when the province has done virtually everything in its power to undercut him with statements to the contrary? Building up the hopes of patio owners, restaurants and small businesses by finally loosening restrictions, then pulling the rug out from under them again? The vaccine rollout; less said, the better. A visibly-sick health minister parading in front of cameras earlier this week, fueling rumors that she's passed COVID to everyone in Queen's Park. The spur-of-the-moment decisions and plans that seem to come out of left field and are informed by social media responses on the back of strategic press leaks.

Nevermind the bad optics of vaccine clinics in dense urban centres throughout the GTA sitting vacant as tens of thousands of vaccine doses sit unused, the inconveniently timed scandal over a press secretary being caught out with a Toronto Sun reporter, or the incompetence of our provincial and local leaders blaming Peel for a high concentration of manufacturing workers that are stuck between a rock and a hard place as they try to navigate outbreaks while putting food on the table.

We've been living in a clown world for the past year, and the circus shows no signs of stopping.

Honk honk. Can't wait to see the trapeze act.

It wasn`t enough that we`ve known for weeks where the hotspot postal codes are in Peel, Toronto and other regions, and yet this whole concept of introducing mobile vaccination clinics and inoculating anyone 18 and over (along with a priority focus on the manufacturing sector) should have been done at least three weeks ago -- not Wednesday morning, in a cabinet conference where the idea to non-ironically try to enforce charges against residents moving from region-to-region was flouted. If you want people to take you seriously, be stringent, be prompt, and decide on this weeks in advance. You shouldn`t be relying on Twitter and Facebook to drive lockdown policies at the eleventh hour.

Evidently, many in our business community agree. An open letter published by the Ontario Chamber of Commerce Wednesday evening shared the same sentiments towards the province's business community.

"Closures buy us time at a high cost to business, our economy, as well as the mental and the long-term health of Ontarians. We recognize the restrictions brought in today are to help save lives and curtail the spread of the virus. However, in absence of further supports, new restrictions will simply devastate Ontario's business community," OCC president Rocco Rossi and Mississauga Board of Trade CEO David Wojcik wrote in an open letter. "An expedited vaccine roll-out prioritizing essential workers who cannot work from home is critical to preventing these stops and starts that are so damaging for business. With the Ontario Business Support Grant coming to a close, we call for continued supports that will see businesses through the third wave of the crisis."

After all, the small and medium sized businesses will continue to take the punches, just as they did during the last lockdown.

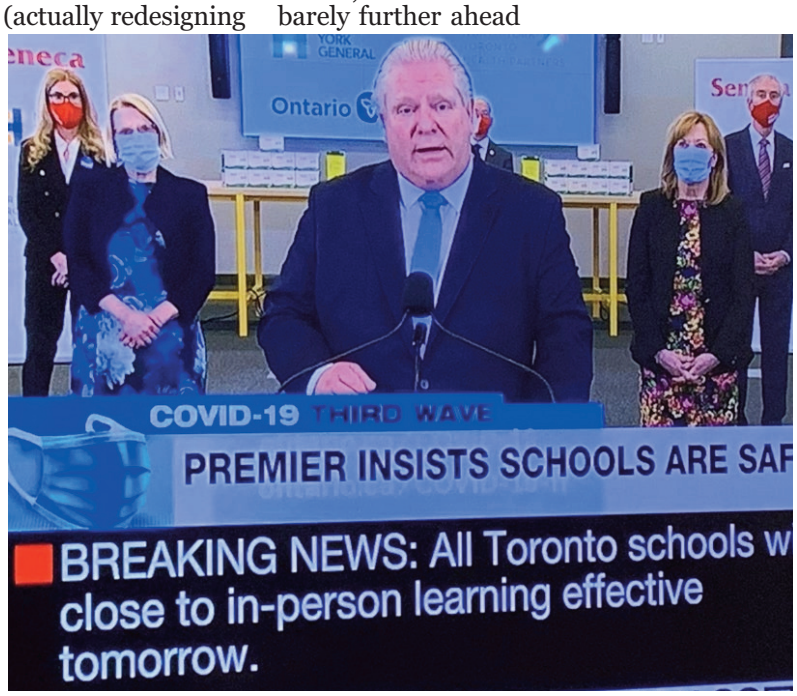
Do you remember how well "essential goods only" at big-box retail worked the last time around? I do. Ropes being placed in aisles at Costco and Walmart in an attempt to funnel people into fewer aisles. The alternative (actually redesigning stores to limit non-essential items) is such a logistical nightmare that I can't fathom anyone in a position of power would take it seriously, especially with such short notice.

I suppose I should be fair, though -- Ford has lived up to his stance on job creation... by creating subindustries where you can get your hair done and all your personal services taken care of on the sly. It's like I've taken a time machine to 1920's Chicago,. Can't wait for the underground speakeasies that will pop up in Peel.

This is the third kick at the can. We've tried, and failed, at curtailing this twice before, and we're barely further ahead than when this whole mess started a year ago.

If people are unironically comparing the Premier to someone like California Governor Gavin Newsom, who is facing a recall crisis over his inability to handle the pandemic, how do you think this government is going to be viewed three-to-six months down the line? Where is the credible, consistent leadership?

Telling us we're your "friends" isn't enough, Doug. Last-minute solutions aren't the way to go, and consistent, structured, capable planning is needed to get us past this pandemic and on the road to recovery.



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Opinion

Will there ever be peace in the Afghans?

Surjit Singh Flora
Column

At least 75 Taliban fighters were killed by the Afghan army in Kandahar province in the first week of March, after three female journalists were shot and killed amid a wave of attacks spreading fear among professional workers in urban centers.

In another operation, Afghan commandos freed 27 army personnel and seven civilians from Taliban captivity. In Kunduz province, 11 security personnel were killed in a Taliban attack. In Herat province, the Taliban detonated a car bomb, killing eight civilians.

The ongoing peace talks with the Taliban in Doha, Qatar's capital, have come under suspicion. There is little hope that the negotiations will reach a new stage and pave the way for peace.

In February this year, more than 250 Afghan soldiers and 70 civilians were killed in Taliban attacks.

U.S. President Joe Biden said the government is reviewing the ground situation in Afghanistan. It looks like the Biden administration will definitely change the Trump administration's Afghanistan policy. This is also because the United States has long felt trapped in Afghanistan.

Biden indicated that the peace deal between the Taliban and the US administration could also be reconsidered as they do not see much hope in the agreement. The biggest hurdle remains the mistrust between the two sides in the peace talks.

The Biden administration has also indicated that Afghanistan's U.S. military presence will continue after May this year. The peace deal between the Taliban and the Trump administration promised that U.S. troops would leave Afghanistan by May 2021.

However, there are only 2,500 US troops. The Biden administration is also unhappy with the U.S. peace envoy Zalmay Khalilzad, who played a key role in the peace talks.

Khalilzad had shown great haste in the U.S.-Afghanistan peace talks. He ignored some important issues, including human and women's rights, which had been restored in Afghanistan over the years.

Khalilzad even ignored Ashraf Ghani's elected government during talks with the Taliban. He has always been skeptical of representatives of the Uzbek, Tajik and Hazara ethnic groups in the Afghan government during his negotiations with the Taliban.

Even after the peace agreement, the Afghan army, Attacks on police and civilians continued.

More than 3,000 Afghans were killed in Taliban attacks last year. The success of the Afghan peace process also depends on the attitude of Pakistan and Iran. Trump's outspoken anti-Iranian stance has called into question the peace talks.

Afghanistan is a neighbour. Iran and Pakistan have been playing a very active role in Afghanistan for the last three decades. The Trump administration has been cooperating with Pakistan, but ignoring Iran.

Over the past decade, the Taliban has strengthened its ties with Iran. Proof of this is that the Taliban delegation went to Iran during the Doha peace talks and held talks with the Iranian government.

The Taliban delegation in Tehran had said that a peace deal between the United States and the Taliban would remove Ashraf Ghani's government in Afghanistan, and an Islamic government would be formed.

There is no possibility of forming an Islamic government. Over the past few days, Guinea has begun to formulate a different strategy from the Doha peace talks as it is now starting to doubt the success of the Doha peace talks.

There is no doubt that the Taliban have taken control of rural areas in half of Afghanistan's states, but they know it will be challenging to take over Kabul because they will not allow such Hazara and Tajik tribes.

That is why Pakistan is also trying to find a middle ground and infiltrate the Taliban's government in Kabul. That is why Pakistan wants to make the Doha talks a success.

Pakistan is seeking Taliban commanders' participation in its Deoband madrassas in Kabul to strengthen its hold in Afghanistan. It is quite possible that the Biden administration will not surrender to the Taliban like the Trump administration on men's and women's rights.

The Doha peace talks were expected to change the Taliban's attitude towards women's rights, but it became clear that the Taliban wanted to establish an Islamic government in Afghanistan and did not agree to give women their rights.

Even in Canada, PM Trudeau, when picking his cabinet, picked equal women and men to run the country.

The South of Afghanistan has been under Taliban threat for over two decades. Women, willingly or forcefully, are locked inside their homes most of their lives out of fear of Taliban threat. Therefore, it's hard to tell what the women's condition is like, as anyone barely gets to speak to women there.

In Afghanistan, Violence affects 82 percent of Afghan women, much of which is domestic abuse.

After a long struggle, Afghan women have gained many rights in the last few years, such as government jobs. There are women in the judiciary and in politics. she is also well represented in Parliament. Although the Taliban is unwilling to continue these rights, the Biden administration will not allow women's rights to be eroded in Afghanistan.

It seems that in the years to come, Afghanistan will have to go through a period of conflict. The parties to the Afghan peace talks have their own interests and are working hard to protect them.

Who would want to leave Afghanistan like this? Given this turbulent situation, the prospects for complete peace in Afghanistan seem bleak.

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Brampton thief arrested after set of local robberies

A 33 year-old Brampton resident has been charged in connection with a series of local robberies that took place in the city over the last month-and-a-half.

Peel Police's Central Robbery Bureau said Monday that the suspect was involved in four separate robberies in Brampton between Feb. 26 and Apr. 6, with three of the incidents targeting local banks.

The suspect attended a bank in the heart of Brampton's downtown core on Feb. 26 and indicated to a bank teller that he demanded money. The suspect obtained an unknown amount of currency before fleeing the bank.

More than a month later, on Apr. 1, the suspect visited the same bank and once again demanded money, being given an undetermined sum before fleeing the area.

On Apr. 3, the suspect robbed a convenience store in the Queen Street and West Drive area, brandishing a knife and demanding money. The suspect subsequently fled the scene without receiving any money.

On Apr. 6, the suspect, attended a bank in the Dixie Road and Queen Street area and again demanded money from a teller, before fleeing the scene with an undetermined sum of money.

Police indicated in a statement that an investigation was ongoing against the suspect, and he was arrested two hours after the Apr. 6 robbery, in the Queen Street and West Drive area.

The suspect, Nouradine Ahmed, was found to be in possession of stolen property.

Ahmed was charged with four counts of robbery and four counts of wearing a disguise with intent, and was found to be in breach of a 2017 parole order for related robbery convictions.

Ahmed appeared in Brampton court to answer to the charges on Wednesday morning.

Anyone with additional information regarding the case is asked to call (905) 453-2121, ext. 3402.

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No wrongdoing in police interactions with Mississauga residents: SIU

Due process or justice unserved?

The families of two Mississauga residents who were died during police interactions are asking that question after the province's Special Investigations Unit completed their investigations into a pair of incidents that occurred in 2019 and 2020.

Clive Mensah, a 30 year-old man who lived in the Runningbrook Drive and Riverspray Crescent area of the city and was dealing with mental illness, died on Nov. 20 after a police taser was deployed during an interaction.

The SIU concluded that officers attempted to restrain Mensah, and were forced to use the taser, causing him to go into medical distress.

Despite attempts at the scene to render aid, Mensah died as a result of the interaction

"We have dedicated our lives to protect and help the communities we serve. Due to the unpredictable nature of policing on the frontline, our officers often find themselves in difficult situations. Despite their best intentions to navigate these situations safely, there is at times a tragic outcome. We are committed to seeking collaborative opportunities to mitigate risk for persons in crisis," Peel Police Chief Nishan Duraiappah said.

However, that was cold comfort for Mensah's family, who wrote in a statement Monday that "no family should have to lose a loved one this way. Clive was alone and scared and had done nothing wrong."

SIU lead Joseph Martino summarized in his report Monday that while significant force was used, and that the cops may have been able to restrain Mensah instead of deploying a taser, "allowance must be made for the fact that police officers embroiled in potentially volatile situations need not measure the nature and extent of their force with precision."

In a similar report released Monday, the SIU said that no additional action would be taken regarding the case of 62 year-old Ejaz Choudry, a Malton resident who was shot and killed by a Peel Police officer from his balcony after efforts to de-escalate the situation — in which Choudry brandished a kitchen knife and couldn't understand the officers speaking to him — proved unsuccessful.

The incident, which occurred in June 2020, saw officers attend Choudry's residence on Morning Star Road at the request of Peel Paramedics, and learned that he had barricaded himself inside his apartment.

Efforts to speak to Choudry, who couldn't understand the requests of the officers being spoken in English, were unsucessful.

During the altercation, one of the officers shot two bullets from the balcony of Choudry's apartment, striking him in the chest.

Despite attempts to render aid, Choudry succumbed to his injuries at the scene.

The SIU report indicates that the officer who discharged his weapon, who refused to be interviewed for the report as per the province's Police Services Act, claimed in his notes that he'd "had no choice."

In a statement Monday, Choudry's family expressed disbelief with the decision, stating that he had "committed no crime," and "did not deserve any of this."

Three charged in drug trafficking ring in Peel

Peel Police's Specialized Enforcement Bureau have laid charges against three individuals in relation to a drug trafficking operation in the region.

An investigation was launched earlier this year after authorities learned of a drug trafficking ring in the region.

A number of warrants were served in Brampton and Mississauga on Friday, netting the arrest of three individuals affiliated with the ring and multiple weapons, more than 2,500 rounds of ammo and drugs seized during the operation.

28 year-old Johnathan Sinclair, of Mississauga; 29 year-old Akilah Andall, of Brampton; and 19 year-old Jaylen Howe, of Mississauga, have each been charged with multiple offences, including unauthorized possession of a weapon, possession with intent to traffic, conspiracy to commit and more.

More than a half-kilogram of fentanyl, three 9mm pistols, a high-capacity drum magazine and quantities of cocaine (one kilogram) and oxycodone (6,550 pills), along with a cocaine press, more than $5,000 in cash and kits containing implements used in kidnapping were seized as a result of the investigation.

All three men appeared in Brampton court to answer to the charges on Apr. 3.

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Suspect with ties to Brampton kidnapping caught

A suspect connected to a high-profile kidnapping has been arrested, police revealed earlier this week.

22 Division's Criminal Investigations Bureau said Monday that the suspect, Paul Prokopiw, was arrested on APr. 1 in connection with the kidnapping of 23 year-old Salina Ouk, who managed to get away from her captors.

Late last month, officers attended a property on Adventura Drive in Brampton after calls regarding a disturbance. When they arrived, a conversation ensued between a suspect, Kwami Garwood, and officers.

Soon afterwards, Garwood fled the scene in a vehicle with Ouk inside. Officers located the vehicle, left abandoned a short time later.

Ouk later attended 22 DIvision by herself, and was transported to a hospital with non-life-threatening injuries.

Police say they have spoken with her regarding her kidnapping and treatment during the intervening period.

On Apr. 1, Prokopiw was arrested in Toronto and charged with one count of accessory after the fact and one count of obstructing a police officer.

Prokopiw will appear in court on June 9 to answer to the charges/

Garwood is still being sought by police for a number of offences, including kidnapping, forcible confinment, aggravated assault and possessing an unlicensed weapon.

He is believed to be armed and dangerous, and residents are asked to refrain from interacting with him and to call 9-1-1.

Residents with information regarding the case are asked to call 22 Division at (905) 453-2121, ext. 2233.

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Special

Lure of easy money driving "economic prostitution" in city

by **Surjit Singh Flora**

A damaging industry has formed in Brampton, as economic slowdown has caused women, particularly in the Southeast Asian community, to turn to prostitution for easy money — and the problem is growing more visible month by month.

Teenage girls of Indian origin with a student visa in Canada are increasingly turning to a life of crime, prostitution and selling drugs for easy money.

Last year, the story of a 23-year-old Punjabi resident who had committed suicide by falling under a train in New Hamburg, Ontario made waves across the province. It was reported at the time that the man had taken a loan and could not repay it due to a lack of work, and that he was mentally dis—-turbed. This was blamed on the ongoing struggles associated with COVID-19.

The same troubles have begun to face women in the South Asian community locally, who have turned to illegal and dangerous methods to earn money in the face of economic slowdown.

Recently, a close friend told me that his daughter, who lives in Brampton, said that she has seen a rise in women turning to prostituion to earn money due to a lack of work opportunities and to repay loans incurred through education.

This is not merely anecdotal. Rosie Thakkar, a diversity coordinator for the Royal Canadian Mounted Police in Surrey (British Columbia) says that more and more Indian-origin girls turn to prostitution and eventually become drug dealers in these gangs.

In many cases, the "South Asian younger girls are getting used in this process, whether for easy money or to get g a n g s t e r boyfriends," says Thakkar.

What the RCMP has worried about is the fact that the number of Indo-Canadian teenage girls joining such gangs is increasing.

A 15-year-old girl who participated in the Thakkar investigation said that South Asian girls think this is a way to get rich quickly.

"Girls just want money. They like shopping," thesource said. "They just need more money to sell drugs."

From time to time, the RCMP has launched a new female-only programme to help teenage girls build self-esteem. But the problem is not limited to the city of Surrey. The issue of South Asian gangs is severe in all of Canada.

Besides British Columbia, these gangs are also a massive headache for police in Ontario, particularly in Brampton , which also has a high Punjabi population.

The problem is more visible than ever. Anyone with a working computer and a search engine doesn't have to look far before they run across scores of listings for Punjabi/Indian girls offering their services, which run anywhere from $80-300.

Although this topic is often discussed in the Canadian media and on social media in Canada, the question arises in my mind whether this spate of cases involving young people being involved in significant accidents were motivated by mental challenges or depression over the economic slowdown, and whether those cases were motivated by suicidal tendencies.

Our media is calling them an accident. This time, I see my suspicions being confirmed.

The truth about the youth's deaths is being concealed and the economic problems of the youth, the growing mental issues in them, especially depression, and the growing illegal occupations like drugs, gangs, and prostitution, is only getting worse.

Everyone knows that the business of migration with Punjab is booming. There are more than 10-12,000 such immigration centres in Punjab. Immigration has also become a significant source of income for the federal government.

The feds heavily advertise such programs in the world's major newspapers, electronic and social media. In every corner of Punjab, you are being encouraged to migrate to Canada.

A report by the Fraser Health Authority shows that between 2015 and 2018, the number of deaths from overdose among South Asians increased by nearly 300 per cent, while the number of non-South Asians living in areas under the jurisdiction of health authorities increased by 138 per cent.

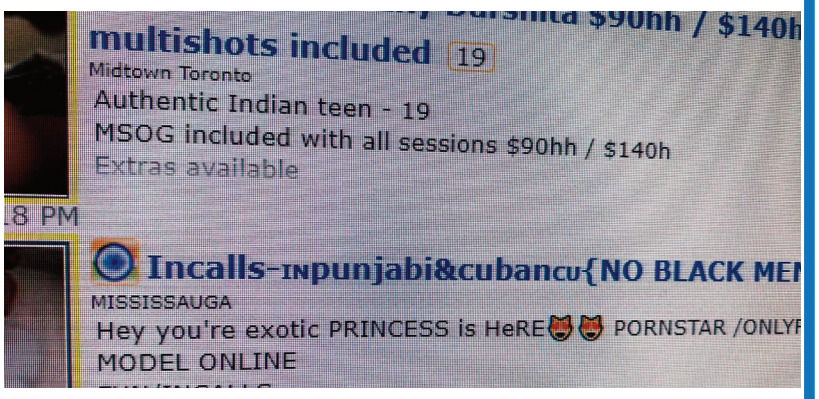
By 2020, toxic and illegal drugs caused 1,716 deaths. This is a 74 per cent increase from the 984 deaths in 2019, causing coroners in 2020 to call it an overdose.

Punjabi media is trying to hide the truth; but can it really be hidden?

This isn't easy to do nowadays. The influx of Punjabis into Canada has dramatically increased.

It has become more accessible to relatives and friends over WhatsApp, and the growing influence of social media is making it very difficult to hide the truth.

If our newspapers or electronic media try to do so, they will not succeed and nor will they be able to maintain their credibility.



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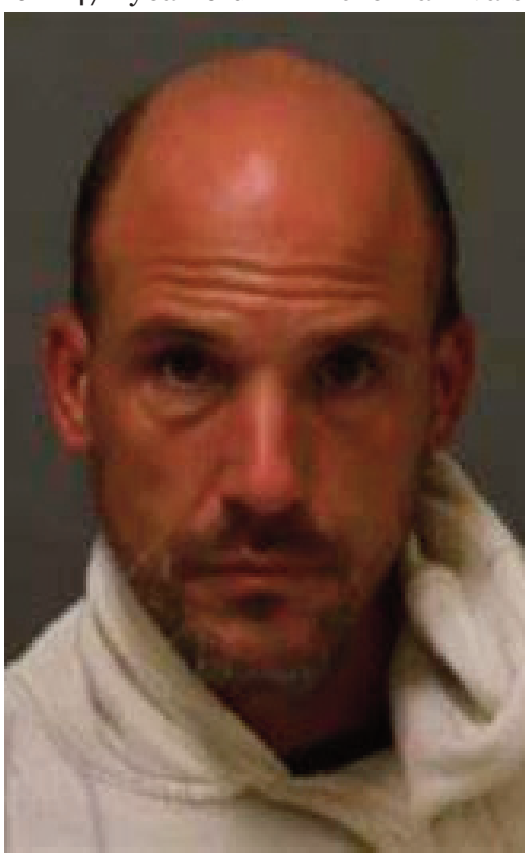
Suspect nabbed after hate incident at Pearson Airport

Police have arrested a suspect who damaged a prayer room at Pearson Airport last month.

Investigators from Peel Police's Airport Division said late last week that a warrant was issued for 47 year-old Jean Francois Ouellette-Godin, who is charged with one count of mischief in connection with the incident, which took place on Mar. 21.

Ouellette-Godin was present in Pearson Airport, in the arrivals level of Terminal 3, around 2:30 p.m. when he entered a multi-faith prayer room and began to cause damage within.



Police later said Ouellette-Godin was arrested on Apr. 2, and will appear in Brampton court to answer to the charges on June 7.

"This incident was a violation of the sanctity of a prayer space – a place where our Muslim community can take time to pray and reflect," said Chief Nishan Duraiappah on Thursday.

Anyone with additional information regarding the incident is asked to call Peel Police's Airport Division, Criminal Investigation Bureau at (905) 453-2121, ext. 3133.

Rec centre converts to vaccine site

by **Alex Gregory**

Peel's newest mass vaccination clinic opened on Tuesday, bringing the region's total to seven.

The Region said in a statement this week that the new vaccine site will be located at Chris Gibson Recreation Centre, located at 125 McLaughlin Road.

The region currently operates several vaccination sites in all three municipalities, including the Region of Peel's central offices at 10 Peel Centre Drive and 7120 Hurontario Street, the Save Max Sports Centre at 1495 Sandalwood Parkway East in Brampton, the Caledon East Community Complex at 6215 Old Church Road, the International Centre at 6900 Airport Road, and the Paramount Fine Foods Centre at 5500 Rose Cherry Place.

As of earlier this week, the region said that residents in priority groups, including adults over the age of 60, can book an appointment to receive the first dose of the COVID-19 vaccine, via the Region of Peel website (peelregion.ca/coronavirus/vaccine/book-appointment/) or by phone.

Additionally, residents can book appointments through the region's health partners, including William Osler Health System and Trillium Health Partners. Select pharmacies are also offering the AstraZeneca-brand vaccine to individuals over the age of 55.

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PEEL WEEKLY NEWS Digital Newspaper

BUSINESS

Local healthcare provider celebrates milestone with art contest

Mississauga's HealthPRO will celebrate a milestone anniversary with a national contest honouring the country's healthcare heroes.

The healthcare provider, which operates one of its offices in the city, announced Monday that it will offer one artist with a $25,000 donation to the healthcare facility of their choice for the best piece of art recognizing frontline workers in healthcare.

The event, being held to recognize the company's 25-year anniversary as one of the country's leading group contracting providers for healthcare, said it is inviting all artists, professional or amateur, to take part in the contest.

"We're incredibly proud of the work our team has delivered over the last 25 years, and we look forward to taking on the next set of challenges the sector presents to us," said HealthPRO president and CEO Renato Discenza.

"As we reflect on this tremendous milestone, know that we remain committed to helping our members by continuing to invest in our two main strengths: Knowledge and Trust."

The company, which is linked to over 1,300 healthcare facilities, said in a release that it works to reduce the cost of high-quality products and services while helping maintain assurance of supply.

As of 2021, the company has returned more than $740 million to the Canadian healthcare system in the form of patronage dividends.

"In thinking of an appropriate way to commemorate our anniversary, we felt there was no better, or timely approach than honouring the work of Canada's healthcare heroes," said Discenza. "We want to celebrate the tireless efforts of Canada's dedicated healthcare professionals who make an incredible difference in the lives of patients and their families."

As part of the contest, artists from across Canada can commemorate the vital work of Canada's healthcare professionals: nurses, doctors, pharmacists, administrators, custodians, procurement professionals and beyond.

Eligible entry mediums include photography, painting, drawing, and digital art.

The winning artist will have the opportunity to direct a $25,000 monetary donation to a publicly funded Canadian healthcare organization of their choice, to help make a different in their local community.

Additionally, the top three finalists will each receive a cash prize.

More information, rules, regulations, and submission deadlines, can be found at facesofcanadianhealthcare.com.

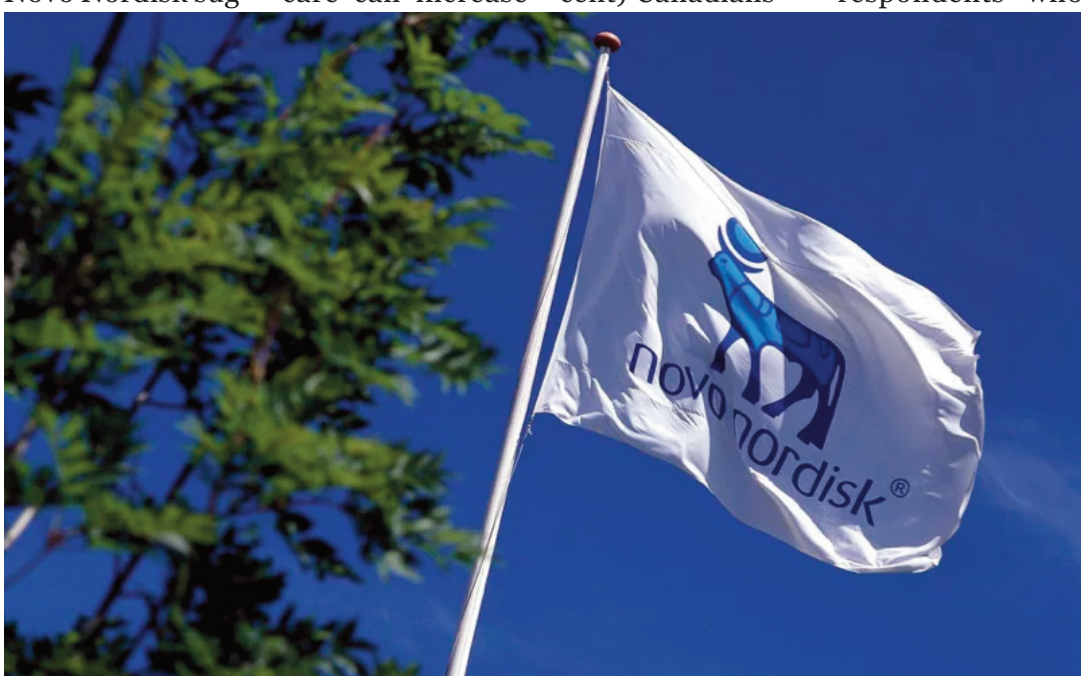
Canadians with chronic health conditions reluctant to seek care during pandemic, survey finds

Canadians living with chronic diseases - like arthritis, cancer, diabetes, heart disease or obesity - are reluctant to seek proactive care during COVID-19, a new national survey by Novo Nordisk suggests.

The new survey, released by the Mississauga-based drugmaker this week, suggests that while Canadians may think they're reducing potential health risks, delaying care can increase negative health outcomes and impact demand on healthcare professionals and the medical system.

Chief among the survey results are a statistic suggesting that almost four in ten (38 per cent) Canadians -- who have been clinically diagnosed with a chronic disease -- say they are avoiding the healthcare system altogether during the pandemic.

Additionally, 13 per cent of survey respondents who have been clinically diagnosed with a chronic condition have neither visited their physician nor had a virtual/telephone visit since the start of the pandemic, while just over half (56 per cent) of survey respondents with a chronic condition visited their physician in-person during the pandemic.



"Offering virtual care is good for patients, health care providers and the system, too," said Diabetes Canada vice-president of science & policy Seema Nagpal.

"Especially in this pandemic environment, virtual medicine can facilitate delivering care. It can always be beneficial for people who live in a remote area or if they have mobility limitations. Electronic consults can help primary care providers obtain the advice of specialists for their patients. Many people affected by diabetes find virtual visits to be convenient; they experience high quality clinical care and are able to access the support they need in the virtual setting."

The survey was conducted between Feb. 26 — 28, with 1,532 adult Canadians. 492 (35 per cent) of which have been clinically diagnosed with a chronic disease (such as arthritis, cancer, diabetes, heart disease, mood disorders, obesity, etc.).

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Green programs on deck as city celebrates Earth Day

From Apr. 12 to 24, the City of Mississauga will host a series of online Earth Days 2021 events.

These environmentally-focused events will educate residents on sustainable actions they can take to protect the environment while helping to make the city more climate change resilient.

Events range from online field trips and walking tours to nature sketching sessions. Earth Days 2021 programming encourages residents to develop a greater understanding of low-carbon and environmentally-friendly practices.

Can't make it to an Earth Days 2021 event?

Residents are encouraged to continue getting involved and help green Mississauga.

Environmental actions residents can take at home include eating a more plant-based diet; ; driving less; walking, cycling or taking transit; planting trees; growing local food; planting a rain garden; hanging clothes to dry; conserving more and wasting less; replacing light bulbs with energy efficient bulbs; and clearing storm drains of blockages.

For more information on Earth Days 2021 and a full schedule of events, visit mississauga.ca/earthdays.

Grant recipients announced for Advance Brampton Fund

Churches, local soccer clubs and a number of non-profit organizations are among the 42 recipients of the 2021 Advance Brampton Fund (ABF).

The city announced on Tuesday that more than $500,000 in grant funding will be delivered to non-profit and charitable organizations throughout Brampton, with approved projects in emerging, developing and amplifying projects.

"From supporting festivals and events, to local non-profit organizations delivering health and wellness programs to our youth and seniors, the (city) is committed to support initiatives that build our city and drive us towards our 2040 Vision," said Wards 1 & 5 regional councillor Rowena Santos. "We are grateful to our ABF recipients and the meaningful work they do to support our community."

New this year is the Emerging Projects stream, which supports new and emerging projects in the city and accepts applications on a quarterly basis. A second call for applications is now open.

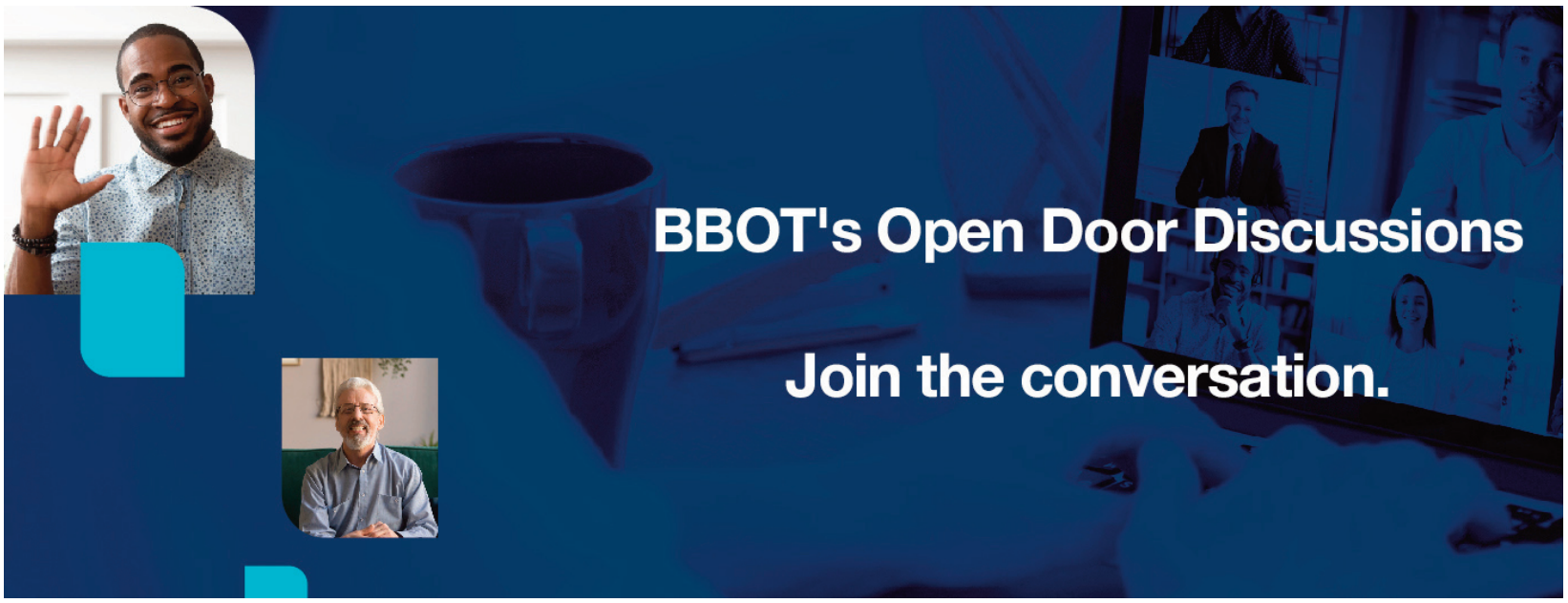
The Emerging Projects stream provides matching funding to Brampton-based charities and non-profit organizations up to $5,000, with applicants required to submit an application by Apr. 30.

One of the 2021 grants provided through the ABF Amplifying stream for community safety was to Big Brothers Big Sisters of Peel for its mentoring programs.

The organization received $25,000 to fund four Brampton group mentoring programs; two teen mentoring group programs; one 'Bigs on Campus' Group Mentoring Program at Sheridan College; and, launch of a Black Youth Mentoring Program, also at Sheridan College.

"With the opportunity for emerging stream projects to apply quarterly, I encourage all charitable and non-profit organizations to apply," said Wards 9 & 10 councillor Harkirat Singh. "Your organizations provide programs that build the Brampton community and make a positive difference in residents' quality life."

A full list of recipients can be viewed by visiting the Advance Brampton Fund website at brampton.ca/ABF.



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Kent joins Region as new CFO

Gary Kent has been announced as the new Chief Financial Officer and Commissioner of Corporate Services for Peel.

The region announced this week that Kent, who is outgoing from his role as the Commissioner of Corporate Services and CFO of the Mississauga, will join the Region as of May 10.

Kent will be responsible for ensuring the region remains financially sustainable while continuing to deliver its suite of internal services.

Having worked with the city for the past 25 years, Kent recently held a senior role in COVID-19 response and recovery, participating on the AMO-Provincial-TO COVID MOU subcommittee, as well as the FCM CFO table on financial impact which lead to Safe Start Funding.

Kent holds a Bachelor of Arts in Accountancy from Glasgow Caledonian University, designations of CPA and CGA as well as the Institute of Corporate Directors Designation (ICD.D). He has also won many awards, including the Chartered Association of Certified Accountants' Canadian Advocate of the year in 2019.

"Gary brings extensive knowledge of municipal finances and a long history of successful leadership to his role as CFO and Commissioner of Corporate Services at the Region of Peel," Chief Administrative Officer Janice Baker said Tuesday.

"With his exemplary leadership experience and established financial expertise, I am confident that the Region will remain dedicated to sustainable financial management while continuing to deliver first-rate internal services. I would also like to thank Julie Pittini and Kathryn Lockyer for their consistent leadership in the Finance and Corporate Services departments during this time of transition. With Gary's arrival, these two departments will merge, allowing us to capitalize on the strengths of both departments and build on an already collaborative culture in the delivery of integrated internal services."

As Chief Financial Officer and Commissioner of Corporate Services, Kent will continue to ensure the region remains a leader in financial management and internal services, maximizing the benefits of tax dollars and transforming them into valuable services for the community.

Mississauga crypto seller fined after securities fraud

The Ontario Securities Commission (OSC) announced late last week that the chief executive officer of a company that offered cryptyocurrency has been charged with multiple offences.

The Commissions said Friday that Mississauga resident Stephan Katmarian, who acts as the CEO and Chief Operating Officer of Peblik Inc. (Peblik) was charged with fraud, trading in securities without registration, trading in securities without a prospectus, and making a statement in information submitted to the OSC that was misleading or untrue.

The charges related to Katmarian's role in Peblik, when the company promoted an initial coin offering of a crypto token called 'Peblik Token.' Between Jan. 1, 2018 and Aug. 8, 2019, Peblik raised approximately $550,000 from at least 28 investors in the province, despite previously stating to the OSC that no sales had been made to Ontario residents.

Further, at Katmarian's direction, the company represented to investors that the value of the Peblik Token was backed by Peblik's ownership interest in a USD $4.8 billion mineral resource deposit in Canada. The statement regarding Peblik's ownership interest was false, the Commission said in a statement.

Katmarian is scheduled to appear in Toronto court on May 12 to answer to the charges.

Any investors who were solicited or who invested in Peblik should contact the OSC's Contact Centre at 1-877-785-1555 (Toll Free) or inquiries@osc.gov.on.ca.

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Brampton-based spa provides relaxation for all

In the heart of Downtown Brampton, Purple Rain Spa Inc. offers a unique blend of spa treatments geared toward ensuring clients' needs are met.

As a full-service spa with an expert team of Estheticians, they provide specialized services such as couple's getaways, organic spa products, and diabetic care services. Their areas of specialization, attention to detail, and passion for excellent care create an experience that clients love. "When my clients leave, they leave smiling," owner Lorraine Smith proudly exclaims.

Lorraine, born in Jamaica, came to Canada at the age of 14. She explains, "as a child, I've always known that I was going to be an entrepreneur, I've always known that I was going to have my own business." Lorraine did not know the type of business she wanted to own, but she knew the larger picture was to be her own boss.

After years of taking care of herself and her family, Lorraine noticed that information on caring for darker skin tones was incredibly lacking.

To better educate herself on the topic and learn everything there is to know about skincare, she went to Yorkdale Esthetic School. Yet even after her formal training, she still only had minimal information about how best to treat darker skin tones.

Lorraine decided to be the change she wanted to see in the world and became dedicated to creating skincare treatments that cater to the underserved in the beauty industry.

Thus, in Aug. 2014, Purple Rain Spa opened its doors to the public.

Lorraine had to find a viable space in the heart of Downtown Brampton and hustle to build a clientele. Thanks to her talent and exceptional attention to detail, she was able to overcome those obstacles.

The biggest hurdle that got in the way of her business' growth turned out to be Lorraine herself.

Purple Rain Spa started as a one-woman operation, but client demand grew due to her excellent work.

As Lorraine explains, "...clients wanted to bring their friends, their mom, their sister..." but she did not have the space nor the staff to accommodate their demands. She knew it was time to expand, but fear got in the way. "Can I really do this? Am I going to find the right people to help me? Am I going to be stuck? Do I really need to take on more expenses?" are some of the questions Lorraine asked herself. She was afraid because the growth of her business went far beyond what she had dreamed.

How did she overcome this fear? Lorraine says, "I just decided that I'm going to do it, and wherever it falls, it falls." This leap of faith paid off, and she now has four rooms and staff to accommodate groups and individuals alike.

Looking back on that time in the life of her business, Lorraine explains, "I got in my own way. And I think for many people that's actually the case. It's not that they don't want to do it; it's just the fear of what will happen that get's in the way."

As per the pandemic guidelines, Purple Rain Spa had to close down to ensure everyone's safety. Lorraine decided to use this downtime to participate in the Starter Company Plus Program offered by the Brampton Entrepreneur Centre (BEC).

The program "...was very informative, and even though I have been in business for a while now, I realized that there were still a lot of things that I didn't know. I learned a lot that I am now implementing in my business".

The program's grant helped her business stay afloat. With all her new training in tow, Lorraine says that she is "hoping to take the business to another level, get into more marketing, and focus on building my brand even bigger."

Approaching her seventh year in business, Lorraine is optimistic about what lies ahead. Despite all the downsides of the pandemic, Lorraine says the 'boom of zoom' means people have to be on camera more often and are more aware of how they look.

"Appearance is still a big thing, even more so now," Lorraine explains. She looks forward to getting back to serving her increasingly diverse clientele once it is safe to do so.

For more information on Purple Rain Spa, visit purplerainspa.com.

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Brightwater launches new townhome collection

Following on the heels of the success of the first phase of a south Mississauga master-planned community, the Port Credit West Village Partners (comprised of Kilmer Group, DiamondCorp, Dream Unlimited and FRAM + Slokker) have announced the launch of the Brightwater Towns in Port Credit.

The Brightwater Towns will include 106 luxury townhomes bordering the western edge of the 72-acre master-planned community at Lakeshore and Mississauga Roads.

The exclusive townhomes are three storeys and feature generously sized three and four-bedroom layouts.

Prioritizing the resident experience and greenspace, each townhome features an individual walk-up along a landscaped path.

These luxury townhomes are set alongside the lush Benson trail, which will incorporate a new multi-use path and enhance connections from Lakeshore Road to the Port Credit waterfront for pedestrians and cyclists.

Brick-paver boulevards lined with trees, designed by landscape architects Public Work and Ferris + Associates, lead to a large pedestrian mews with seating, birch groves and twinkling catenary lights, serving as a picturesque extension of residents' homes.

A private amenity area in the pedestrian mews will also incorporate a sculptural children's play area, inspired by the waves of Lake Ontario.

Last summer, the highly anticipated mixed-use towers Brightwater I and II were introduced, along with two commercial buildings.

Recognized in 2020 with the prestigious Best New Community (Planned/Under Development) award by BILD, Brightwater includes 2,995 new residences, as well as 150 affordable housing units.

The site includes 18 acres of green space, including a nine-plus acre waterfront park.

Additionally, over 300,000 square feet of commercial space will be made available, as well as a future elementary school and proposed community centre.

"We're proud to offer elegant living and design options in the Port Credit community with the release of the Brightwater Towns. The Brightwater Towns honour the flavour of this wonderful neighbourhood while bringing it into the future. We understand that residents, now more than ever, are looking for quality outdoor space and privacy, while also enjoying an urban lifestyle and connection to their community," says Ken Tanenbaum, Vice-Chairman of Kilmer Group and Chair of the Port Credit West Village Partners.

Internationally acclaimed architecture firm Superkül brought a bold vision, presenting three refined townhome designs that encapsulate a modern, luxurious waterfront aesthetic.

To create a welcoming environment, Superkül infused the homes' façades with nods to Brightwater's past and present – using masonry, inspired by the site's history as a former brickyard, as well as coastal-inspired materials like horizontal siding, and a soft colour palette to connect to the water.

"Inspired by Brightwater Towns' coveted location, we wanted to create an intriguing variety in elevation and suite types that speak to themes of coastal and contemporary living. We took a holistic approach to the residences, blending timeless style with thoughtful, meaningful spaces to create a sense of awe," says Andre D'Elia, Owner and Principal of Superkül.

The three distinct townhome designs integrate dynamic rooflines with private rooftop terraces that maximize views to the waterfront and surrounding community. The unique exteriors create visual variety along the streetscapes enhancing the overall design appeal of the Brightwater community.

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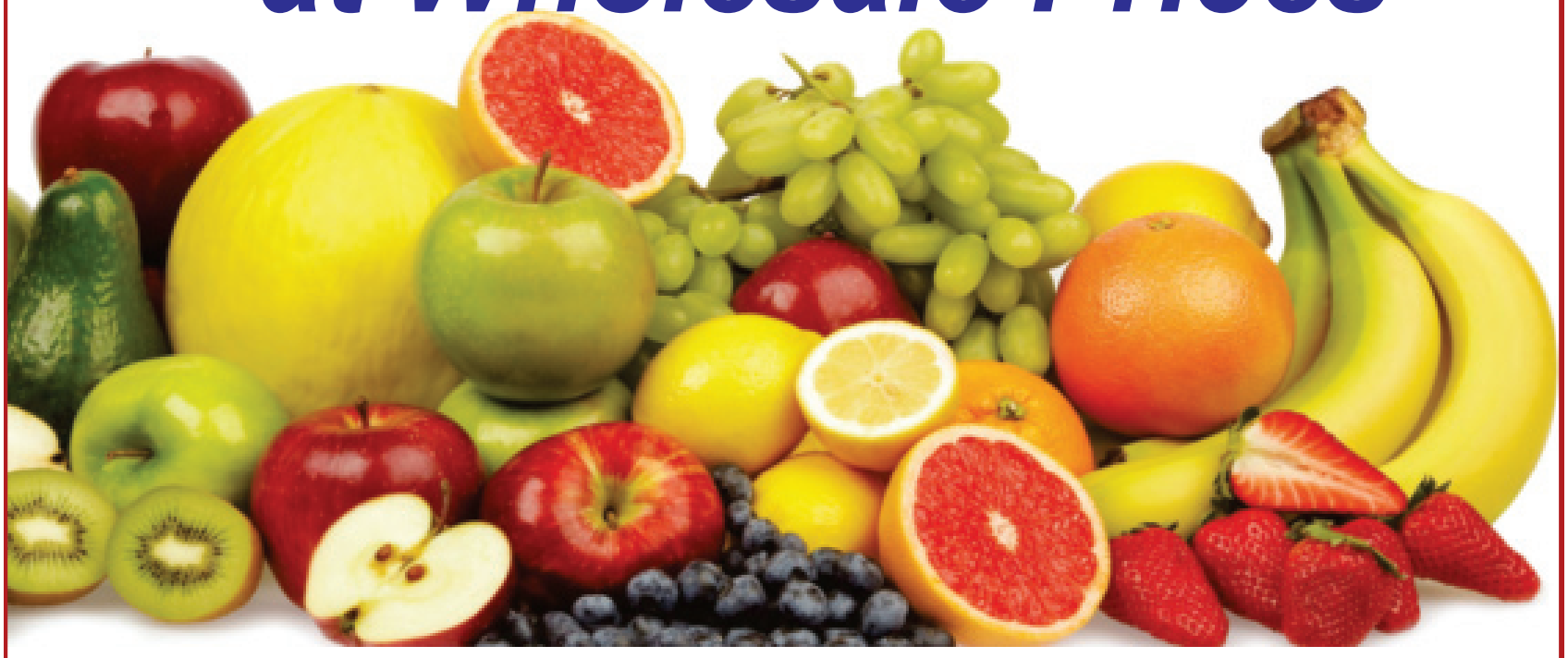

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In association with Mississauga Arts Council and Peel Weekly News

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PEEL WEEKLY NEWS Digital Newspaper

LIFESTYLE / AROUND TOWN

New writing contest opens for authors young and old

by **Joseph A. Monachino**

The Mississauga Writers Group will be holding a poetry writing contest to encourage creativity in writers young and old — and with several exciting prizes to be won!

The Mississauga Writers Group has been in existence since January 2013, and has grown to over 100 members.

It is a group of writers who have established this forum to share their experiences and pursue our dreams through creativity, knowledge and mutual respect.

The group is also part of Mississauga's Arts and Culture community, and attend and are part of several local events and fundraisers.

This year, the group will be hosting a poetry writing contest for the youth and older adults of the community.

The Young Voices Contest is open to those 18 years old and younger. The Poetry Writing Contest is open to everybody. Permission by parent or guardian is required for 16 and younger. A permission form will be included with the submission.

The deadline for these contests is Sep. 30, 2021. A short two-sentence bio is required with each entry.

The Seniors Writing Contest is for those who are 65 and older. A short two- sentence bio is required with each entry. The deadline for this contest is also Sep. 30, 2021.

The winning submissions will be featured in Peel Weekly News, and all entries will be included in our yearly anthology.

Enter for a chance at winning a $100 first-place prize, a $75 second-place prize, or a $50 Indigo Gift Card third-place prize.

In a statement, the Writers' Group thanked Mississauga Arts Council and Peel Weekly News for their help promoting this contest.

For submission guidelines and to submit a piece, email the Mississauga Writers' Group at submissions@mississaugawritersgroup.com.

Self-publishers invited to new arts council workshop

Mississauga Arts Council and the Mississauga Writers' Group will introduce writers to a world of publishing during a two-day online event being hosted on Apr. 17 and Apr. 30.

The TD Culture Lab – Explore Publishing Workshop is a two-day virtual workshop that will explore self-publishing and traditional publishing, with local presenters also hosting informative webinars.

The workshops will engage local writers through informational online presentations, panel discussions, and networking opportunities on the topic of publishing.

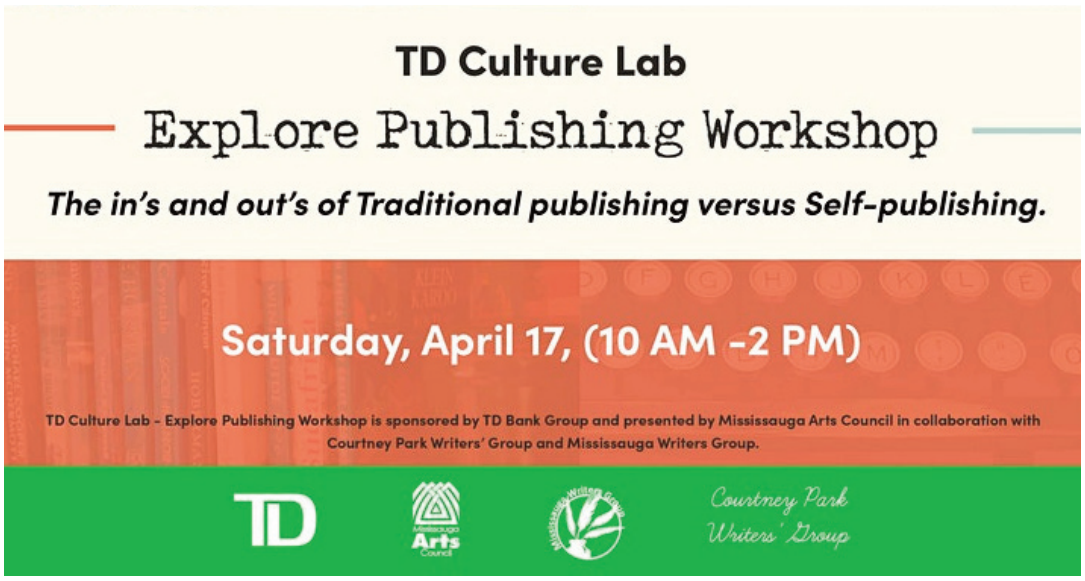
Both self-publishing and traditional publishing will be explored and explained by knowledgeable individuals in the sector. These sessions will encourage participants to ask many questions, as this has been found to be a valuable part of on-line learning experience for many.

Day 1 will run on Saturday, Apr. 17 from 10 a.m. - 2 p.m., and Day 2 will be held on Friday, Apr. 30, from 1:30 - 5 p.m. Admission will be free for both webinar.

The event will also feature informational webinars on both self and traditional publishing led by Elizabeth Banfalvi of the Mississauga Writers' Group and Mary Ellen Korosil of Courtney Park Writers' Group.

After each event, participants can take part in a virtual networking lunch where they can get to know other writers or ask questions of their colleagues.

Tickets for the event can be obtained by visiting the registration page at eventbrite.ca/e/td-culture-lab-explore-publishing-workshop-day-1-tickets-148835662473.



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Health and Wellness - "Yes, but..." or "Now what?"

by **Elizabeth Banfalvi**

Have you ever had a time when something inside of you questioned what you were doing or told you to run away as fast as you can? I know I have so many times.

Unfortunately, I didn't listen. Sometimes the repercussions came quickly and sometimes it took a long time to find out.

That is your "Yes, but" moment or your intuition talking, and you didn't listen. Me too!

I'm not just pointing my finger at you because it has definitely happened to me.

One instance for me was quite quick. I had to deliver something and I parked on the street in Toronto. I looked up and there was a sign stating "No Parking".

I heard the voice inside of me telling me to park in a safer spot. No, I thought I wouldn't be long, so I was safe. It ended up it took longer to drop off what I had and guess what?

I had a yellow ticket under my windshield wiper when I got back. Who can I blame? Me, of course because I didn't listen but had the "Yes, but" moment as an excuse.

Have you ever met someone who just didn't feel right? You can't explain it or even say why but something inside of you is telling you that something isn't right.

I was watching an old episode of Oprah, and a guest named Gary Zukav explained this concept.

There was a woman who asked a question about the man she married. She had the same feeling the day before she married her husband and she didn't listen – would we?

She ended up being married for over 20 years, and there were so many instances when she felt something was wrong and she just put it aside – her multiple "Yes, but" moments.

In the end, she finally found out and left. Zukav said those were her intuition speaking or her inside voice. She was still so troubled and disappointed in herself. He gave her a suggestion to from now on when she found herself having the "Yes, but" moments to change it to "Now what?"

"Now what?" is a change of energy. We will still have our "Yes, but" moments but we need to start changing it to "Now what?" and just step back and listen to what you are feeling and hearing.

We do know what is right for us if we just listen. I know I listen to "No Parking" signs now.

The instant you start changing your energy and how you listen is the moment your life will turn around. You will be calmer and just more in tune with who you are and what is important.

You have to live with yourself, your mistakes and your achievements so what do you want? Not that everything will be perfect, but it is a start.

If you find yourself down and not feeling the best especially about what you are going through then ask "Now what?" and just listen. It might take time to get the answer, but you will get one or you will feel more energized that you are doing something. Practice this often and it will be easier.

We seem to think at times that we have no options but we do. Choices are always there to be discovered or just thought about.

I remember I was in a job interview with 2 people – one a HR rep and the other the woman I would be working for.

He liked me, but she just kept looking out the door to see what everyone else was doing. Did I get the job – thankfully, no. I could feel her disinterest in me quickly. There are clues everywhere so we just have to keep our head up and see them.

Our intuition will guide us, so just listen. It might initially disappoint us but better that we listen than to have long term disappointment.

So, now what? Only the best for us! Enjoy!

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Are rising house prices a trend or an epidemic?

by **Surjit Singh Flora**

We have passed the one year point of the COVID-19 epidemic, during which time many businesses have been shut down and unemployment has risen.

However, house prices in Canada have risen sharply during this period.

Prices in real estate are overly high because of high demand.

An estimated 280,000 immigrants land in Canada every year, and out of that, roughly 180,000 immigrants settle in the Greater Toronto area. So, the demand is and will be increasing as long the immigration system is strong.

Vancouver is another overpriced city, largely because of investment from Chinese and South Asian Immigrants and investors. With the introduction of a 15 per cent surcharge for foreign investors, there has been a drop of 40 per cent for sale in Toronto in August 2019, but it looks like this was a temporary phenomenon.

The outlook for real estate in the GTA in 2021 pretty much summarizes what was coming and was correctly forecasted.

The Canadian Real Estate Association says property prices have risen by an average of 25 per cent in one year, while the increase is more than 30-35 per cent in some areas.

The average home price in Canada ($678, 091) is being reported, but this is the national average, and no home of any kind can be purchased at this price in the area between Toronto and Vancouver.

The COVID-19 epidemic has forced many people working in cities like Toronto and Vancouver to work from home, which has pushed up prices in the surrounding small towns as well.

Within 100-150 kilometres of big cities, house prices have become unaffordable. Many people are now moving to Canada's eastern provinces due to rising costs, which has led to higher house prices in those areas as well.

The Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation have warned of falling house prices in Toronto, Ottawa, Halifax and Moncton (NB). The Bank of Canada also issued a warning in February that the home market would overheat. Even in 1980, house prices started to rise overnight, but then the market crashed.

Today, ordinary houses are being sold at a price higher than the listed price. Ordinary people get more nervous when real estate agents talk about selling a home for two-to-three million more than the listed price. In such a situation, anxious customers are buying a house at a price beyond their reach.

It has become common to rent a basement and calculate this rent as income, which is why people are hanging on to their heels. People are also taking big mortgages due to meagre interest rates, but if the interest rates go up, people with 'open variable' interest rates could be in big trouble.

The skyrocketing prices are said to be the enormous gap between the supply and demand of households.

Foreign money is coming to Canada unhindered, with a large share being invested in the real estate market. The Trudeau government has increased immigration rates, which has led to rising demand for housing too.

Immigration, along with higher economic growth. We are a sluggish economy no matter what party is in power average about 1.5 per cent growth. Trudeau's government also brings in more immigrants per capita than anybody at 350,000, while the U.S. brings in one million out of a population of 350 million. Immigration benefits the wealthy and upper class.

So, supply and demand. Supply is limited, yet the market seems endless because everybody wants to come to live here in Toronto and Vancouver, so naturally, when supply is limited, yet demand keeps increasing, prices go through the roof.

There is also talk of misleading people by real estate and mortgage agents. The stories of irresponsible agents are also painful.

Customers who sign an agreement to buy a home without any condition are sometimes caught in the crossfire when banks refuse to offer a mortgage, and a mortgage agent's promises come to naught.

Now trapped people are again forced to take a private mortgage by paying a hefty fee on which they have to pay a lot of interest. Many people find it difficult to get close and then afford to go home.

Today, Canadian-born children are forced to live with their parents and find it challenging to build their own homes. Home will also be a big dream for new immigrants.

The Trudeau government failed to take timely action against the COVID-19 epidemic. Canada has also lagged far behind allies in administering the vaccine.

Rising house prices are no less than an epidemic. How the next 12 months impact the market will be the true test for our real estate.

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Focus on Film Forum - The Canadian Film Fest

by **Joseph A. Monachino**

The Canadian Film Fest is an important festival.

Also known as the CFF, the non-profit organization and festival that bears the name are dedicated to supporting Canadian independent films and cultivating emerging and established film-making talents.

CFF's mission is to celebrate the art of cinematic story-telling by showcasing Canadian films and film-makers.

By exclusively featuring Canadian films, it's goal is to provide film-makers with valuable showcasing and networking opportunities and to offer the public homegrown productions to view and enjoy.

This year, the festival runs from through Apr. 17, totally virtual.

I had the privilege to watch the opening night film, called "Sugar Daddy," directed by Wendy Morgan and written by and starring Kelly McCormack. Colm Feore is amongst the impressive cast.

The film revolves around Darren, a wickedly talented and unconventional young musician who dreams of making music like nobody has ever heard before.

But she's broke, juggling multiple part-time jobs, and has no time to create. Desperate for cash, she signs up to a sugar daddy paid-dating website and throws herself down a rabbit hole that forces her to grow up fast, shaping her music, and how she sees the world.

Having seen the movie, I found it compelling. That is because she was thrown into an unknown circumstance that she had to get accustomed to. Instead, she developed a jaded attitude to that lifestyle.

The means to the end of earning cash, in this way, to survive and thrive wasn't worth the trouble she faced.

In the end, she finds solace in her own space after experiencing the cynical escort lifestyle.

I would encourage readers of this article to see at least one feature or short film during this festival. You would get great satisfaction in seeing a quality production while at the same time supporting the Canadian Film Industry.

Residents interested to learn more about the Canadian Film Fest can reach me at filmfocus-peel@gmail.com.

Seeds

Some seeds fall
Land and find
A place to settle
Bravely wait for dawn
To take root
To bloom
Not knowing
If enough raindrops will come
Not knowing if enough rays of sun will shine

Some seeds are planted
Chosen carefully
Cultivated and nurtured
By graceful gardeners
Providing enough water
Providing the right placement in the sun

Some seeds
Drift and scatter
Carried in the wind
Losing their way
Not able to take root
Lost in the shrubbery of life
Hidden treasures
Sought after by doves
Sustaining bluebirds flight
Nourishing nightingales songs

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PAMA encourages residents to Stay Positive and Celebrate!

An assortment of new virtual programming is on-deck at the Peel Art Gallery, Museum and Archives (PAMA) — including activities recognizing Sikh Heritage Month, Spring Break, Volunteer Appreciation and more!

Through Apr. 30, PAMA and the Sikh Heritage Month Foundation will partner to offer a special outdoor and virtual showcase featuring a work by local mixed media artist Aman Chahal. The work is titled "9:30 p.m. at Harmandir Sahib," and depicts the Gurdwara in India, also known as the Golden Temple.

The outdoor display of his work at pama.peelregion.ca.

The Sikh Heritage Month Foundation will also feature a line-up of virtual programming available now for registration at sikhheritagemonth.ca.

This Spring Break, children and explore, create and connect with a new virtual lineup of activities — which are also great for the whole family.

PAMA will host a number of virtual exhibitions and collections, complete with downloadable step-by-step family friendly activities.

On Wednesday, Apr. 14, PAMA will also host sessions featuring special virtual guest scientist, focusing on the subject, "Up and Down, All Around!"

Participants will explore how things move with Scientists in School, such as discovering the science behind a magic trick, defying gravity by creating a balancing bird, and engineering an elastic racer to chase down Newton's Laws.

Registration is $10 per participant ($8.50 for members), and includes a mini-science kit filled with creative and hands-on materials for participants to keep.

Kits will be available to pick-up at PAMA from Apr. 9 - 13 between 9 a.m. - 4:15 p.m. Registration closes on Apr. 13.

PAMA is located at 9 Wellington Street in Brampton.

For more information or to register for programs, visit the PAMA website at pama.peelregion.ca to learn more.

Recognizing the efforts of Sikh Canadians in April

by **Surjit Singh Flora**

Canada is known as an enthusiastic, diverse, and tolerant country. This is the result of Canadians from all walks of life, races and cultures ensuring that Canada is a country we can all be proud of.

This is one of the reasons why we observe the months of Italian, Tamil, Black, Jewish, and Asian Heritage, and many other reasons.

These months are enough to recognize, respect and remember who we really are. Uniting our values, principles and ideals is a common theme for Canadians.

April recognizes and emphasizes the important contributions that the Sikh community has made to Canada's social, economic, political, and cultural heritage and will continue to make.

Canada proudly has more than 500,000 Sikhs, making it one of the most populated areas for the ethnic group in the world. Sikhs began to immigrate at the end of the 19th century, and members of this community contributed to Canada through their achievements in various fields of society and helped shape Canada's diversity.

The core principles of Sikhism include generosity, equality, openness, and compassion.

Sikh Heritage Month is an opportunity to reflect on the key role that the Sikh community will play and will continue to play a role in building a stronger, consciously more inclusive Canada.

Time to time, the Sikh community-launches a video for public awareness on digital platforms designed to educate and promote diversity within the Sikh community, especially those who choose to become visible Sikhs.

April is an important month for the Sikh community. This month, Canadian and around the world Sikh celebrate Vaisakhi, which marks the creation of the Khalsa and the Sikh articles of faith.

Sikh Canadians celebrate Vaisakhi, also known as Khalsa Day, widely throughout Canada. Every year in Toronto and Vancouver, a large Khalsa Day parade is organized from the CNE grounds to Nathan Philips Sq, and more than 150,000 Sikhs from all over Canada participate, but due to COVID-19, the parade is postponed.

By proclaiming April as Sikh Heritage Month, the Province of Ontario and the Government of Canada recognized the essential contributions that Sikh Canadians have made to the social, economic, political, and cultural fabric of the country.

Sikh Heritage Month is an opportunity to remember, celebrate and educate future generations about Sikh Canadians and the important role they have played and continue to play in Canadian communities.

Sikh Heritage Month was first recognized in Ontario in 2013, after a bill brought by Brampton New Democrat MPP Jagmeet Singh (now leader of federal NDP party) to have the occasion recognized was approved in the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

On Nov. 7, 2018, the federal Parliament voted to celebrate "Sikh Heritage Month" nationally in April of every year, after MP Sukh Dhaliwal's bill was passed in the Canadian Parliament.

It is also important to acknowledge that the journey that Sikhs experience in Canada is not always easy.

In the process, the community faced intolerance and prejudice. These challenges effectively make Sikhs second-class citizens by complying with unfair labor laws.

Many Canadians are aware of the terrible Komagata Maru incident and the Sikh boycott. Sikhs arrived in Vancouver to seek a new starting point. though the government refused at that point because of discriminatory laws.

The law began to change so that the faith of Sikhs was seen as an equal member of Canadian society.

By 1947, Sikhs were able to vote in federal elections. They support the right to vote and believe that citizen participation is not only a right, but also an important part of citizenship.

In 1908, the Sikh community established Canada's first Sikh Temple in Vancouver, B.C. This has become a center of faith, residence, advocacy and assembly, and community leaders are committed to finding ways to positively impact the entire Canadian community.

"The Articles of Faith and the turban worn by Sikhs ensures that they are always recognizable and visible. The Sikh identity was engineered to stand out and compel Sikhs to battle for justice and equality."

The rich Sikh history in Canada is very personal to me, because it is also reflective of my own 31 years in Canada personal journey and experience; the Canadian Charter of Rights lets me wear a turban on my head and keep a long beard on my face, as well as let me wear the five "K's" on my body, such as the Kesh (uncut), Kara (a steel bracelet), Kanga (a wooden comb) Kaccha (cotton underwear) and Kirpan (steel sword).

To all Sikhs, Happy Sikh Heritage Month!

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PEEL WEEKLY NEWS
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HEALTH

Study suggests women are 3 to 6 times more prone to knee injuries

A new study has found that social and not just biological factors are responsible for ncreased knee injuries among girls and women. The findings of the study were published in the British Journal of Sports Medicine. Current approaches to a common and debilitating knee injury that occurs more frequently for women than men have focused for too long on biology at the expense of understanding social factors, said the authors of the study.

Girls and women are said to be between three to six times more likely to suffer an anterior cruciate ligament (ACL) injury, where one of the key ligaments that helps to stabilise the knee joint is damaged.

The devastating injury, which in extreme cases can be career-ending for professional sportspeople, commonly occurs during sports that involve sudden changes in direction (for example basketball, football/soccer, tennis).

The difference in injury rates for men and women has not changed for two decades, but, this might be partly due to how injury prevention and management has been approached to date. Writing in the BJSM the authors argued that much of the focus still centres on biological and hormonal factors, with little attention paid to how sex-based factors are affected by gender and might influence each other.

They suggested that gendered experiences matter in shaping girls' and women's participation in sport as well as disparities in injury outcomes. They demonstrated how this could play out across the life course with gendered expectations of physical abilities (e.g. 'throw like a girl'), to inequitable access to funding, training, and facilities for women's sport (for example disparities in access to weight training).

Finally, they suggested there may be a difference between post-injury rehabilitation for men and women recovering from an ACL injury. They say that these social and environmental factors play a much bigger role in how sports injuries occur than once thought, and urge that much more attention be given to these topics.

Dr Sheree Bekker from the Department for Health at the University of Bath (UK) explained, "We wanted to unpack the biases and assumptions that we were seeing in research into and practice around sports injuries in girls and women. Specifically, we wanted to challenge the increasingly pervasive idea that this is simply a problem for girls/women because they are inherently prone to injury just because of their female biology. Approaching ACL injury prevention and management from a strictly biological view can propagate sexism in sport with detrimental consequences for girls and women."

Caffeine intake during pregnancy linked to smaller babies

Pregnant women who consumed caffeine as little as half a cup of coffee a day on an average had slightly smaller babies than pregnant women who did not consume caffeinated beverages, a new study revealed.

The study found corresponding reductions in size and lean body mass for infants whose mothers consumed below the 200 milligrams of caffeine per dayabout two cups of coffeebelieved to increase risks to the fetus.

Smaller birth size can place infants at higher risk of obesity, heart disease and diabetes later in life.

"Until we learn more, our results suggest it might be prudent to limit or forego caffeine-containing beverages during pregnancy," said researcher Katherine L. Grantz from the NIH's Eunice Kennedy Shriver National Institute of Child Health and Human Development.

For the study, published in the JAMA Network Open, A the team analyzed data on more than 2,000 racially and ethnically diverse women at 12 clinical sites who were enrolled from 8 to 13 weeks of pregnancy.

From weeks 10 to 13 of pregnancy, the women provided a blood sample that was later analyzed for caffeine and paraxanthine, a compound produced when caffeine is broken down in the body.

Compared to infants born to women with now or minimal blood levels of caffeine, infants born to women who had the highest blood levels of caffeine at enrollment were an average of 84 grams lighter at birth (about three ounces), were 0.44 centimeters shorter (about .17 inches), and had head circumferences 0.28 centimeters smaller (about 0.11 inches).

Based on the women's own estimates of the beverages they drank, women who consumed about 50 milligrams of caffeine a day (equivalent to a half cup of coffee) had infants 66 grams (about 2.3 ounces) lighter than infants born to non-caffeine consumers. Similarly, infants born to the caffeine consumers also had thigh circumferences 0.32 centimeters smaller (about 0.13 inches).

Pfizer, Moderna vaccines highly effective after first shot in real-world use

COVID-19 vaccines developed by Pfizer Inc with BioNTech SE and Moderna Inc reduced risk of infection by 80 per cent two weeks or more after the first of two shots, according to data from a real-world US study.

The risk of infection fell 90 per cent by two weeks after the second shot, the study of nearly 4,000 US healthcare personnel and first responders found.

The results validate earlier studies that had indicated the vaccines begin to work soon after a first dose, and confirm that they also prevent asymptomatic infections.

Some countries dealing with limited vaccine supplies have pushed back schedules for second doses with the hope of getting some protection to more people. U.S. public health officials, however, continue to recommend two doses be given on the schedule authorized by regulators based on clinical trials.

The study by the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) evaluated the vaccines' ability to protect against infection, including infections that did not cause symptoms. Previous clinical trials by the companies evaluated their vaccine's efficacy in preventing illness from COVID-19, but those studies would have missed asymptomatic infections.

The findings from of the real-world use of these messenger RNA (mRNA) vaccines also confirm the efficacy demonstrated in the large controlled clinical trials conducted before they received emergency use authorizations from the U.S. Food and Drug Administration.

The study looked at the effectiveness of the mRNA vaccines among 3,950 participants in six states over a 13-week period from Dec. 14, 2020 to March 13, 2021. About 74% had at least one shot, and tests were conducted weekly to catch any infections without symptoms.

Source: Reuters

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PEEL WEEKLY NEWS
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WOMEN

Home remedies to deal with pigmentation

We being Indians face a lot of pigmentation especially around the mouth and while we try our best to maintain a proper skincare routine, patchy skin does not seem to find an escape. Hyperpigmentation is a skin issue where a patch of the skin creates more melanin than the rest of the face resulting in patchy skin. While pigmentation can be a result of an underlying medical condition, most patches can be dealt with at home and here are some of the remedies that you can use:

Besan scrub

It is necessary to scrub off the excess dead skin cells and the dry upper layer of the skin for the body to create a new one. This is where homemade scrub can be useful.

All you need:

- 1 tablespoon of besan aka gram flour
- 1 pinch of turmeric
- Cold milk or yoghurt

Directions:

- Mix all the ingredients in a bowl to create a smooth paste.
- Apply it generously on your face and neck and let it sit for 10 minutes.
- Once its almost dry, scrub off the mask with a damp hand. Make sure to massage off the mask in circular motions and be gentle.
- Once the mask is off, rinse your face with cold water and moisturise after.
- Use this scrubbing technique twice a week to see visible results.

Green tea

Green tea is an ingredient that is filled with antioxidants that help clear out your skin and reduce dark patches.

All you need:

- 2 green tea bags

How to use:

- Steep green tea in hot water for about two minutes and let the tea bags rest aside.
- Once the tea bags are warm enough to touch, use them on problematic areas on your skin.
- Leave it on for about 10 minutes and use this method twice a day to see visible results.
- You can even use the steeped green tea as a natural toner for better results.

Methods to dry flowers to enjoy your favorite blooms year-round

Dry flowers in a press

The process of pressing flowers involves drying flower petals by using either a flower press or a heavy book to press the moisture out of the petals. The best time to press flowers using this method is when they are fresh and dry.

To dry flowers with a heavy book, arrange the flowers between sheets of unbleached paper, and put them inside the pages of the book. This will not only absorb moisture from the flowers, but protect the pages of your book.

Once the book is closed, you can add a heavy item such as a paper weight to apply pressure. Oweh suggests refraining from using textured paper, such as paper towels, that could leave unwanted imprints or breaks in the dried petals.

Air-dry flowers

The air-drying method lets nature do all the work, simply by hanging your blooms.

Use larger bouquets and arrangements for this method, letting them air dry when they are in mid-bloom.

With air-drying, start by securing your bunch of flowers with a piece of string or rubber band and hang them upside down in a cool, dark place with good air circulation.

While this method can take a few weeks depending on the flower, it is the least expensive and less intensive method. Your flowers will be ready as soon as they are dry to the touch and have slightly shriveled and faded in color.

Keep in mind that when arranging your dried flowers, some petals and leaves may crumple or fall. Visualize your arrangement before preparing and be mindful of the flowers' fragility.

To keep your dried flowers pristine and slow down the fading process, Oweh recommends spraying your flowers with hairspray.

Dry flowers in silica gel

Found in many packaged products, silica gel absorbs and holds water, making it the perfect material to dry flowers in. Drying flowers using silica gel is considered the best method and leaves flowers looking the most realistic, according to Oweh. In this process, it is common to use a variety of fresh, single flowers in full bloom.

Before using this method, gear up with a protective mask and gloves to avoid inhaling the non-toxic silica gel dust and to prevent cleaning silica gel off your hands. The first step is to fill your container with one to two inches of silica gel, then place flowers face up and slowly continue to pour over the flowers, making sure petals do not get flattened.

Source: Business Insider

CONNOISSEUR'S CHOICE

By Tript Arora

Kaanji: The Indian pro-biotic drink

In the month of February when you visit the vegetable market, you will see these dark purple color carrots. Fermented in the Sun with water, salt and mustard powder, these carrots make an excellent probiotic drink.

In India it is called Kaanji. It is rich in antioxidants, dietary fibre, vitamin C , potassium & magnesium. It also boosts your digestion thereby boosting your immune system. Kaanji is the miracle health drink. Easy to prepare and full of health benefits. What else one can ask for ? All you need is black carrots, Black salt, mustard seeds, red chillies and water. In the absence of Black carrots you can use ¾ part red carrots and ¼ part beetroot for that beautiful colour. But I prefer black carrots any day since they taste good as well as produce a very vibrant colour.

These are all mixed with water and fermented in the Sun for 4 to 5 days. You can strain it after five days and drink immediately or keep it in a fridge. The carrots in the kaanji can be used as pickle and tastes awesome with khichdi or rice. Always use glass or terracotta pots for the fermentation process. The benefit of using terracotta pot is that it will cool in a natural way and there is no need for refrigerating the Kanji. My mother used to make it in a big terracotta pot and keep it in the sun. It is pungent in taste so as a kid I didn't relish it so much. But my mother made it compulsory to drink this because of its health benefits. But as I grew up I started relishing it as well as preparing it myself. It has the balance of sourness and sweetness. So enjoy this super healthy, gut friendly drink. It is like Kamboocha made in your own home.

We need

6 Black Carrots, 2 Tbsp Mustard Powder (rai), 2 Tbsp Black Salt, 1 Tsp Red Chilli Powder or Black pepper powder, 7 glasses of Water

Here We go

- Cut carrots in thin strips.
- In a glass jar drop carrots slices, black salt, red chilli powder, mustard powder.
- Fill with seven to eight glasses of water.
- Cover it with a lid.
- Keep it in the Sun and let it ferment for 4 to 5 days . Stir it daily.
- Strain and Enjoy this gut friendly Kaanji with or without ice.

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PEEL WEEKLY NEWS
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SCIENCE & TECH

YouTube experimenting with hiding dislikes to protect creators

Google-owned YouTube has confirmed it is experimenting with hiding dislikes to protect creators and channels from targeted attacks to downvote their videos.

YouTube said in a tweet late on Wednesday that in response to creator feedback around well-being and targeted dislike campaigns, it is testing a few new designs that don't show the public dislike count.

"Creators, you'll still be able to see the exact number of likes and dislikes in YouTube Studio. For viewers, if you're in the experiment, you can still like or dislike a video to share feedback with creators and help tune the recommendations you see on YouTube," the company announced.

Currently, data for both likes and dislikes are available in a creator's individual YouTube Studio page, but only likes will be displayed publicly on a video.

YouTube said it is not testing hiding dislikes on all creators' videos but with a select few to begin with and gather insights.

NASA exchanges data of its Mars mission with India, China

The US space agency NASA has exchanged data of its current Mars mission with its counterparts in China, India, the UAE and the European Space Agency to lower the risk of a collision as their spacecraft were also currently hovering the red planet, a media report said on Wednesday.

The purpose of exchanges was to lower the risk of a collision, as their spacecraft are orbiting the red planet, Hong Kong-based South China Morning Post reported, quoting a NASA (National Aeronautics and Space Administration) statement as saying.

To assure the safety of our respective missions, NASA is coordinating with the UAE, European Space Agency, Indian Space Research Organisation and the China National Space Administration, all of which have spacecraft in orbit around Mars, to exchange information on our respective Mars missions to ensure the safety of our respective spacecraft, NASA's statement said.

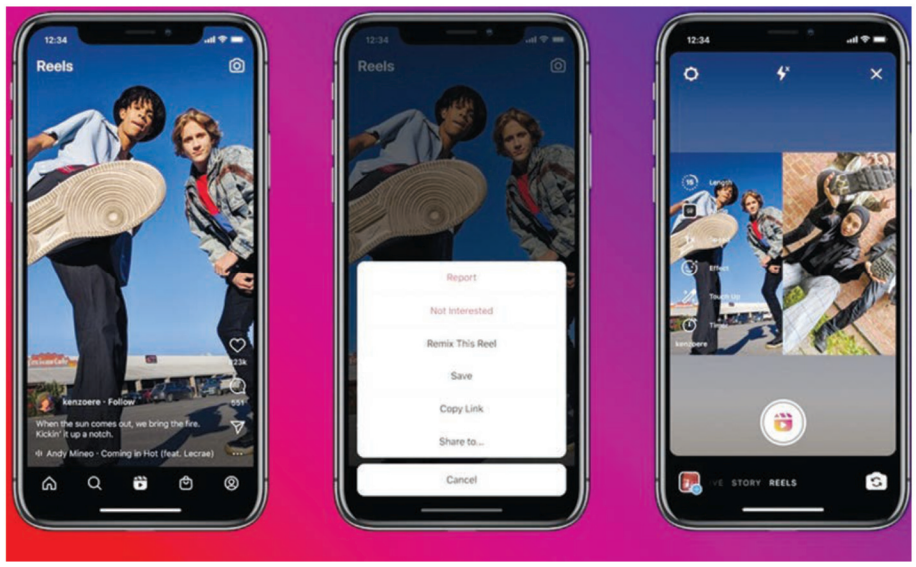
This limited exchange of information is consistent with customary good practices used to ensure effective communication among satellite operators and spacecraft safety in orbit, the report said.

Instagram launches TikTok Duet-like feature 'Remix' for Reels

Instagram has launched another TikTok-inspired feature to Reels. It now allows users to remix a Reel by pairing their video with other users. Its similar to TikTok Duets which are quite popular on the short video app. Instagram has been testing this feature since October last year allowing select users to experiment with, and it is now available to all globally.

The Instagram Reels remix feature will be enabled by default for any new Reel uploaded. But users who wish to have their older Reels remixed will have to manually enable it. This can be done by tapping on the three dot menu button of the Reel, and choosing enable remixing.

The steps to remix a Reel are also the same with users having to tap on the menu button, and select Remix this Reel. A new screen will appear with the original Reel playing on the left side, and the right side showing the new video that will go up. Users can either record a new video or choose an existing one from their phone. The editing options are the same for remixing a Reel, and these include adding effects, timer, adjusting the speed, adding audio and more.



With Remix, Instagram users can now pair videos with other users' Reels.

As mentioned above, Instagram will enable remixing by default for any new Reel upload. There is an option though to disable remixing, and one can do this by opening Settings > Privacy > Reels > Enable remixing. Users simply have to toggle off the option to disable remixing their Reels. The feature is now live on Instagram for all users globally on Android and iOS.

Facebook to let you turn off algorithmic ranking in News Feed

Facebook on Wednesday introduced several features to give users more control over their News Feed, including the ability to turn off the feeds algorithmic ranking and display content in order it was posted. The social network said it is making it easier to sort and browse News Feed, giving users more control over what you see.

"Now, you can control your commenting audience for a given public post by choosing from a menu of options ranging from anyone who can see the post to only the people and Pages you tag," the company said in a statement.

The company recently launched Favorites', a new tool where the users can control and prioritise posts from the friends and Pages they care about most in News Feed.

By selecting up to 30 friends and Pages to include in Favorites, their posts will appear higher in ranked News Feed and can also be viewed as a separate filter.

People who use Favorites frequently can access it from the Feed Filter Bar, a new menu at the top of News Feed.

Android app users can access the Feed Filter Bar when they scroll up on News Feed. The same functionality will be available in the iOS app in the coming weeks.

LinkedIn working on Clubhouse-like audio networking feature

Inspired by the soaring success of invite-only audio chat app Clubhouse, Microsoft-owned LinkedIn is now working on a similar app for over 740 million members in more than 200 countries.

The leading professional networking platform confirmed the move to TechCrunch, saying that it is working on an audio networking feature.

"We're doing some early tests to create a unique audio experience connected to your professional identity," LinkedIn said in a statement.

"We're looking at how we can bring audio to other parts of LinkedIn such as events and groups, to give our members even more ways to connect to their community," the company said on Tuesday.

According to LinkedIn, it will start beta testing of the new audio chat feature soon.

Alarmed at the growing popularity of Clubhouse, several tech giants have begun to a rival app and Twitter has finally started testing 'Spaces' on Android.

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Vaccine appointments at select clinics open

Peel residents 60 years and older can book COVID-19 vaccine appointments at select vaccine clinics in the region.

Clinics located at William Osler's Chinguacousy Wellness Centre and Brampton Civic Hospital, and Trillium Health Partners' Mississauga Hospital and University of Toronto, Mississauga (UTM) sites are currently taking bookings.

Booking will be available at Peel Public Health's six vaccine clinics as part of continuing efforts to make vaccines available to residents.

Vaccinations for residents aged 65 and older continue at Peel Public Health clinics. Information on how to prepare for an appointment and what to expect at a clinic is available at peelregion.ca/COVID19vaccine.

Seniors who have challenges getting to and from the vaccine clinic can use TransHelp. Residents are asked to call (905) 791-1015 at least 48 hours before an appointment to make a booking. Residents don't need to be a TransHelp client to use this service.

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PEEL WEEKLY NEWS
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WORLD

At least 36 dead in Taiwan train crash

TAIPEI (TIP): A train derailed in a tunnel in eastern Taiwan on Friday after apparently hitting a truck, with at least 36 dead and 72 injured, as rescuers struggled to reach crushed carriages, the transport ministry said.

The train, travelling to Taitung, came off the rails in a tunnel just north of Hualien causing some carriages to hit the wall of the tunnel, the fire department said in a statement.

"Is everyone out in carriage four?" a lady is heard shouting from inside the tunnel, in images provided by the fire department.

The official Central News Agency said a truck that was "not parked properly" was suspected of sliding into the path of the train. The fire department showed a picture of what appeared to be the truck's wreckage lying next to part of the derailed train.

The front part of the train was situated outside the tunnel, and those in carriages still in the tunnel were being led to safety, Taiwan's railway administration said.

Images of the crash scene show carriages inside the tunnel crumbled and ripped apart from the impact, passengers gathering suitcases and bags in a tilted, derailed carriage and others walking along the tracks littered with wreckage.

The accident occurred at the start of a long weekend for the traditional Tomb Sweeping Day. Taiwan's mountainous east coast is a popular tourist destination. In 2018, 18 people died and 175 were injured when a train derailed in northeastern Taiwan, in the islands worst rail disaster in more than three decades. Reuters

7 convicted in Hong Kong over 2019 pro-democracy protests

HONG KONG (TIP): Seven Hong Kong pro-democracy advocates were convicted on Thursday on charges of organising and participating in an unlawful assembly during massive anti-government protests in 2019 that triggered a crackdown on dissent. The seven include media tycoon and founder of the Apple Daily tabloid Jimmy Lai, as well as 82-year-old Martin Lee, a veteran of the citys democracy movement. Lai had already been held without bail on other charges related to his pro-democracy activities. They were convicted for their involvement in a protest held on August 18, 2019. Organisers said that 1.7 million people marched that day in opposition to a proposed Bill that would have allowed suspects to be extradited to mainland China for trial.

The activists, apart from those who have been remanded in custody on other charges, were granted bail on condition they do not leave Hong Kong and must hand in all their travel documents. AP

Boris Johnson's senior black adviser resigns amid Downing Street tensions

LONDON (TIP): UK Prime Minister Boris Johnsons senior-most black adviser, Samuel Kasumu, has stepped down from his post as Special Adviser for Civil Society and Communities, it emerged on Thursday, a day after the release of a controversial government-appointed race review.

Kasumus resignation will come in effect from May 1 and Downing Street has dismissed as completely inaccurate reports that it is linked to the Commission on Race and Ethnic Disparities (CRED) report, which had concluded that Britain was not a structurally racist nation even though overt racism remained a reality in the country.

It has been claimed that Kasumus exit was on the cards for some time due to tensions within Downing Street and is not directly linked to the much-criticised report.

Mr Kasumu has played an incredibly valuable role during his time at No 10, a Downing Street spokesperson said.

As he previously set out, he will be leaving government in May this has been his plan for several months and has not changed. Any suggestion that this decision has been made this week or that this is linked to the CRED report is completely inaccurate, the spokesperson said.

Kasumu had previously handed in his resignation in February but went on to retract it. At the time, he had said he wanted to continue work he had been doing fighting misinformation on COVID-19 vaccines with Britains black community, with the view to leaving at the end of May.

However, according to The Politico, Kasumu confirmed his decision to leave Downing Street on Tuesday morning, just as the findings of the CRED report were released.

It comes as racial equality campaigners criticised the findings, and the Opposition Labour Party accused the government of downplaying institutional racism.

Labours shadow equalities secretary Marsha de Cordova called the report divisive, adding it was no wonder the government was losing the expertise from their team.

To have your most senior advisor on ethnic minorities quit as you publish a so-called landmark report on race in the UK is telling of how far removed the Tories are from the everyday lived experiences of Black, Asian and ethnic minority people, she said.

Former equality and human rights commissioner Lord Simon Woolley, who knows Kasumu, said he had been disheartened whilst at No 10 Downing Street.

The House of Lords peer, who has also criticised the CRED findings, told the BBC there is a crisis at No 10 when it comes to acknowledging and dealing with persistent race inequality.

The report has also attracted criticism from unions and charities all of whom accuse the commission of downplaying the role of wider factors in racial inequalities.

Dr Maggie Aderin-Pocock, a member of the commission, said the report was not denying institutional racism existed, but said they had not discovered evidence of it in the areas they had looked. PTI

Serbia's firefighters auction Cristiano Ronaldo's armband to help sick boy

BELGRADE (TIP): The Portugal captains armband which Cristiano Ronaldo angrily threw on the ground after his goal was incorrectly disallowed in a soccer World Cup qualifier against Serbia at the weekend, was picked up by Djordje Vukicevic, a duty firefighter.

The blue armband with a white letter C was then put up for a charity auction by Vukicevic and his colleagues from Belgrade's firefighting brigade to collect money for the treatment of six-month-old Gavrilo Djurdjevic from Serbia who is suffering from spinal muscular atrophy.

"Ronaldo was agitated (and) he threw the armband, it fell right next to me," Vukicevic told Reuters on Thursday.

On Saturday, the 36-year-old Ronaldo, who plays his club football for Italian champions Juventus, stormed off the pitch and threw down the captain's armband when he was denied a clear

stoppage-time winner in the 2-2 draw in Serbia.

Many Serbians resort to fundraising and humanitarian auctions to collect money for medical treatments abroad when they cannot get adequate treatment at home.

Vukicevic said he was ready to sell any memorabilia he could collect from players to help Gavrilo's parents collect 2.5 million euros ($2.94 million) for his treatment, but that the armband was a score.

"The entire crew agreed this (armband) will go for little Gavrilo," he said.

In the village of Cumic, just outside the city of Kragujevac in central Serbia, Gavrilo's mother Nevena said the family had received donations of around 500,000 euros so far. She added that the proceeds from Ronaldo's armband would be a significant contribution. "We could not believe that some people who do not even know us... would take the armband, auction it and help our child,' she said.

So far, bidders have offered around six million dinars ($60,042.03) during the auction on Serbia's Limundo e-commerce platform.

"This captain's armband, which has attracted the most media attention of all armbands ever, can be yours if you join this charity auction and bid," the advertisement says. Reuters

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Your Weekly HOROSCOPE

KNOW WHAT LIES AHEAD FOR YOU THIS WEEK

Week of April 8

ARIES : Your relationships will progressively get betterthis week. Although things will go greatfor you this week, it won't come as a surprise for you because you have been working really hard to be a better version of yourself as well as putting a lot of effort into every relationship of yours.

TAURUS : You will enjoy a lot of solo time and explore nature this week. Use this time to improve your health both mentally and physically. Go on some hikes you have wanted to go for a while now. If you do not think about your future, your life will feel great this week.

GEMINI : Your health might remain a little upset this week. You can help yourself by maintaining a good diet and focusing on hydrating and nourishing your body which will help you maintain a balance internally. A mix of green vegetables and raw food will give you the energy to go forward. Only focus on eating nutritious food this week and exercise regularly as well.

CANCER : Irrational fights in thefamily might arise at the beginning of the week, but nothing major that you need to worry about. If you lay low and learn to control your anger and not be impulsive you will be able to calm the situation down and turn things in positively very quickly. You have to be proactive in solving arguments this week.

LEO : Your love life is progressing rapidly. Taking the next step in your relationship will be a good idea this week as luck stands in the support of your sign. Your property disputes that have been stuck for a long time will be resolved this week as well hence a lot of positive things will happen for you. You need not worry about any obstacles with this dispute as everything will go smoothly.

VIRGO : Your relationship demands you to step up and pull your weight this week. Try to be a better partner this week, try practicing patience, it comes a little hard to you and but you can get there if you try. Being loving and kind is the option you should go for this week because you need to work on being a better person.

LIBRA : You will take some classes you have been wanting to for a while now with your partner today which will bring both of you a lot closer. Thisemotional availability from your end will make you and your partner feel very secured, satisfied and happy in your relationship. It is easy for your significant other to align with your energies this week.

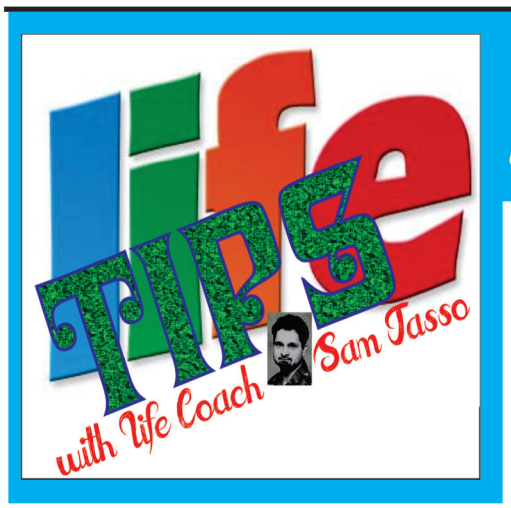
SCORPIO : Your love life is blossoming this week. You will experience love in abundance this week. You will feel blessed to have your partner this week because you will face a lot of troubles wherein your partner will be your biggest support system through all thick and thin. You will realize today that they are a keeper and you will immediately start planning for your future together this week itself.

SAGITTARIUS : Your energies will be high this week due to planetary alignment in your favor. It is a good week for you to relax and enjoy. If you're single you'll come across many new love interests. Venus is dominant in your sign and will provide you with a lot of luck in all matters of love.

CAPRICORN : You will be able to get through things that you were stuck at since a long time this week. It will be easy to focus on work and the new prospect this week as the energies align in your favor a lot this week. Learn what works for you in calming your energies this week. This new-found confidence will keep you happy throughout the week. Your love life might be troublesome for you this week. Some unexpected negative behavior from your partner might tick you off at the beginning of this week. This week might also get you slightly overwhelmed but don't lose your focus. Over thinking about the future will harm your current projects.

AQUARIUS : New opportunities will knock on your door this week, and they can really work in your favor in the near future. Try to worship lord Shiva by chanting the mantra 'Om Namah Shivaya' 11 times every day in this week; it will be beneficial for your personal as well as professional life. Your Health might create minor inconveniences this week. Work on improving your health by taking time to hydrate and exercise. Relaxation exercises will help you navigate through the week very well.

PISCES : You will come across some amazing strangers this week. You will experience a great social life this week, which will keep you occupied throughout the week. You will realize this week that you're doing great in your life. Consider that the stars are in your favor the entire week. Great things are coming your way this week.



LIFE TIPS WITH LIFE COACH SAM JESSO

Dear Sam:
Because of the Covid -19 lockdown mentally getting ill, and What are some tips on making online friends? I feel like it would help my mental health.

Dear worried Friend: What kind of friends are you looking for?
Gaming friends, support group type, etc.?
Some of my closest friends are people I've never met because they live too far away. Some literally halfway across the world. We "met" in a support group on Facebook for people with a medical condition we all share. (chronic migraine) We've had a constant chat going with the 6 of us for over 6 years. It's very rare that one or more of us isn't on. We're all very different in our views, but the bond and judgment free listening make those differences irrelevant. The distance between us, in many ways, makes us closer, because overly simplified...there's no threat of them sharing our secrets with anyone we'll ever meet, even if they get mad and disappear. It gives a bit more of a safety net to be ourselves and to be vulnerable. We have absolutely no restrictions on what we talk about. Every subject is safe.... From relationships to bodily functions, and everything in between. (being in a medical group, certain subjects are more comfortable for us than I'd imagine would be for others.
I absolutely agree that online friends can be an amazing help with mental health, talking things out, etc.
I think the easiest way would be to join a group on Facebook for people who share your interests. If you're into games, find a group on Discord. (idk how it works, I just know it's the gamer's app)
Most relationships start with a "me too" situation. Examples: “I'm going through a divorce'" 'me too' (they have something to talk about that they both understand) 'I am dealing with an illness and it's really flipping hard." 'I know what it's like because I've been there.'
'I LOVE game xyzzy! It's so fun to play! "" OMG, me too! It's my favorite! Which character do you like to play as? "
Finding something you have in common sparks a conversation that very often can lead to a friendship.
That said, and you may already know this, but beware of scammers. They are in every group you can imagine and love to pretend to be someone they aren't, with the end goal of stealing money from you, or getting you to open something that gives them access to your keystrokes... phone or computer.
If anyone tries to send you money, or wants you to send them or someone else money... it's 99% certain that they are not who they are claiming to be and are scamming you.

Good luck!

Got a Question please write to us: samjesso@yahoo.com

WASAGA BEACH

PEOPLE IN PEEL REGION HAVE HAD A LOVE AFFAIR WITH WASAGA BEACH FOR WELL OVER A CENTURY

Are you a property owner, seasonal/part time resident or perhaps just someone who loves "The Beach" and wish to know what is happening in our once World Famous Beach Resort?

Be Aware! Become Engaged!

What's Happening in "The Beach"?

With little or no public engagement, the current mayor & council are making decisions and spending taxpayers' money.

Changes to the once applauded Downtown Master Plan will effect Wasaga Beach for years to come. Our once famous Main Beach Areas are being sliced up and offered to developers, forever altering our historic beachfront and what it means to you and future generations.

For the love of Wasaga Beach and your tax dollars...
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PEEL WEEKLY NEWS
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BOLLYWOOD

Akshay Kumar's magician avatar from 'Atrangi Re' released

Megastar Akshay Kumar, who had been shooting for 'Atrangi Re', recently wrapped up shooting for the film and the actor took to social media to share his first look from the film. Akshay also extended his gratitude to his co-stars Sara Ali Khan and Dhanush for their contribution in the project.

Looking at the first look photo of Akshay from 'Atrangi Re', one can assume that the actor might be seen in the role of a magician. The photo features Akshay dressed in a black designer suit and a huge hat as he holds a king of hearts card on his palm. The actor is seen smiling wickedly as he poses for the lens. Akshay seems to bear a look that has an uncanny resemblance to a magician.

He penned a note of gratitude for Sara and Dhanush, writing, "It's the last day of #AtrangiRe and I can't wait for you'll to experience the magic created by @aanandlrai. Also a big thank you to my co-stars @saraalikhan95 and @dhanushkraja for letting me be a part of this beautiful film. An @arrahman musical. Written by: #HimanshuSharma."

Dia Mirza shares 'special' moments with husband Vaibhav, stepdaughter

Dia Mirza has made some really special memories on her honeymoon with her husband Vaibhav Rekhi and his daughter Samaira. She took to Instagram to share fresh photos from their Maldives getaway.

We made some really special memories in Maldives, she wrote, along with a host of emojis, including an ocean wave, sun, heart and dolphin. One of the hashtags she added to the post was you are special.

In the first photo, Dia held up her hair as she posed with Vaibhav. The second had her posing with Samaira on the beach. The third was a selfie of the couple, with the ocean visible in the background.

Other pictures included Vaibhav and Samaira sipping coconut water and laying out a picnic on the beach. Dia was seen holding the young girls hand in one of the photos.

Earlier, Dia shared pictures and videos of them watching dolphins, and said that the joy they felt was beyond words. Talk about saving the best for last!?! We spent over an hour with a few schools of #Dolphins... 20-30 of them at a time. Words are inadequate to express the joy of witnessing these beautiful creatures in the wild. The Indian Ocean was magic, our time here in her calm waters has been restful and restorative, she wrote.

Dia and Vaibhav got married in an intimate ceremony in the garden of her apartment complex last month. He shares his daughter Samaira with his ex-wife, Sunaina Rekhi. Sharing the first photos of the wedding, Dia had written on Instagram, Love is a full-circle that we call home. And what a miracle it is to hear its knock, open the door and be found by it. Sharing this moment of completion and joy with you..my extended family. May all puzzles find their missing pieces, may all hearts heal and may the miracle of love continue to unfold all around us. #ThankYouPreeta #SunsetKeDiVaNe.

Taapsee Pannu to essay the role of Sania Mirza in her biopic?

Taapsee Pannu is clearly on a roll. The actress, who has delivered some fantastic performances in the last two years, has one of the strongest line ups among actors of the current generation. While she has almost 4 films almost over - Do Baara, Rashmi Rocket, Haseen Dillruba and a South film, the Pink actress is currently prepping for her sports biopic Shabaash Mithu on Mithali Raj's life.

But now, we can tell you that the Mithali Raj biopic isn't the only sports biopic Taapsee is doing. A source says, "Taapsee has now been approached for the Sania Mirza biopic as well. This has been in the works for some time. Ronnie Screwvala bought the rights to her life. The makers wanted a younger actress to play Sania and after Parineeti Chopra playing Saina, they didn't want her to do it. They took the film to Taapsee who has liked the script."

Taapsee's team is currently working out the modalities for the same. Apart from the cricketer biopic, Taapsee is also in talks for Rajkumar Hirani's next with Shah Rukh Khan but according to latest reports, that film has got pushed. So, Taapsee might be able to accommodate the Sania Mirza biopic in that time frame now.

Kangana lauds Sanya's performance in 'Pagglai'

Kangana Ranaut heaped praise on Sanya Malhotra in a fresh tweet, calling her talented and deserving. Kangana also gave a shout-out to Sanyas new release, Pagglait, and said that she heard that the film is doing amazingly well.

She is soooo good .... I am gald people are recognising her talent, I heard #PagglaitOnNetflix is doing amazingly well... so happy for you Sanya you deserve everything and much more ... lots of love to you, Kangana wrote, retweeting one of Sanyas magazine covers. Thank you so much. It really means a lot, she replied, adding heart and puppy dog eyes emojis.

Fans, in their replies, agreed with Kangana. Omg Kangu I luv u. Sanya is a definetely good good good actress. Her choices are mindblowing. Two awesome personalities of bollywood. Its big happy to see ur support towards her, one wrote. Yeayyy!! Our Queen only appreciates fine talent and never mediocrity! Love it! And yes, I agree! Sanya is really good, another wrote.

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PEEL WEEKLY NEWS
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HOLLYWOOD

Kristen Stewart matches Princess Diana's school run look

NOW PLAYING

PEEL WEEKLY NEWS

SMOOTH RADIO

Music from your years

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